

HOUSTON (AP) — An obsessed fan who said he meant to kill himself, was convicted Monday of murdering a woman, a judge said. The man, 31, was charged with the murder of a woman, 26, who was found dead in a hotel room. The man, who was found guilty of the murder, was sentenced to life in prison. The judge said the man was a fan of a rock band and was obsessed with the lead singer. The man had written letters to the singer and had been seen at the singer's concerts. The judge said the man was a danger to himself and others.

Thatcher celebrates 70th birthday, again

WASHINGTON (AP) — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher celebrated her 70th birthday on Wednesday. She was born on October 13, 1925, in Grantham, Lincolnshire. Thatcher has been Prime Minister of the United Kingdom since 1979. She is the only woman to have held the office. Thatcher has led the Conservative Party to three consecutive victories in the general elections of 1979, 1982, and 1985. She has been a member of the House of Commons since 1951. Thatcher has been a member of the Conservative Party since 1951. She has been a member of the Conservative Party since 1951.

New map detail ocean floor

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists using data from a satellite have created a detailed map of the ocean floor. The map shows the depth of the ocean floor and the location of underwater features. The map was created using data from the SeaWiFS satellite, which was launched in 1992. The map shows the ocean floor from the surface to the deepest parts of the ocean. The map is a valuable tool for scientists and for the general public. The map shows the ocean floor from the surface to the deepest parts of the ocean.

Red cross plane escapes Kabul attack

KABUL (AP) — A Red Cross aircraft taxiing for takeoff narrowly escaped a rocket attack Wednesday near Kabul's airport, relief workers and witnesses said. At least two rockets pounded the area around the airport, which is used for civilian and military purposes, airport manager Ali Timur said. Plumes of black smoke could be seen rising just beyond the western end of the runway, where a Red Cross airplane was waiting to takeoff when the rockets hit Wednesday morning. The flight to the western Pakistani city of Peshawar departed after a delay, Mr. Timur said. It was unclear who launched the rocket attack, although earlier in the day rebels belonging to the Taliban militia began a new offensive on Kabul. "The rockets landed just outside the airport grounds, and no one was injured," Mr. Timur said. The Taliban militia have vowed to topple President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government through a military campaign.



Jordan Times

An independent political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية - الراي

20 YEARS

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Jordan Times celebrates 20th anniversary

By Our Staff

FOR 20 YEARS today, since the zero issue of the Jordan Times was printed, we have made it our business to write about other people, whether here or abroad. The idea was, and remains to be, to inform those who read our newspaper on what happened in the world just a day earlier or so. We have consistently done it within a context, or a framework, whose construction involves a complex formula otherwise called the act of editing a newspaper. But because we have always realised the limit of our power, and that of our colleagues, to report the news, elucidate on them and discern trends in society, we steadfastly strove to do the job in an even-handed and accurate manner.

We failed or succeeded depending on what perspective you have of us and the work we generally do in newspapers. Our performance has been mixed, we think. We did not produce a good issue every day and we made mistakes; but, on the other hand, we were hopefully informative and useful, and we did make it a policy to admit mistakes when we discovered them or when they were pointed out to us.

environment and readers has been positive. This ultimately means a challenge: how and when the Jordan Times can leave behind the issue of survival and to enter new, wider horizons.

could develop enough to cope, journalistically speaking, with the demands of regionalisation, as indeed this country as a whole is doing politically and economically — and to when and how we can

medium terms we have to think of how we can treat shortcomings in our existing operations: complete computerisation of our facilities at the newspaper, reduce editing and proofreading mistakes to a minimum, train more Jordanian journalists, expand coverage of local events and politics, focus more attention on cultural developments and entertainment, devise methods to expose corruption and fight bureaucracy, do proper follow-up on stories... the list is indeed long.

Today, in the special issue we are producing to mark our 20th anniversary, which includes a 12-page pullout supplement, we talk not so much about other people but about ourselves. Basically, about how this newspaper came into being, how it has developed over the years, the kind of problems we have been facing and about the individual experiences of our editors and reporters, past and present.

The goal is to give our readers a clearer insight into our world. We reckon that if we are better understood the bonds with our readers will be better sealed, enabling us to serve our purpose better and longer.

This special issue also

20th Anniversary

That we are here 20 years later testifies to the fact that we have had good reason to live, and that interaction with our

We pose to ourselves such long-term questions as to when we will tackle the possibilities of regionalism — whether we

have, for instance, correspondents abroad as well as in every Jordanian town and city. In the short and

Jordan-Israel peace treaty — one year on

By Natasha Bukhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — On Oct. 26, 1994, the leaders for Jordan and Israel met at their desert border to sign a historic peace treaty, which they vowed, would turn the arid landscape into a prosperous valley of peace. One year later, the sub-agreements to be reached under the peace accord are only just completed and many Jordanians are complaining that the promised "peace valley" remains a barren wilderness. Jordan ended over 40 decades of enmity with the Jewish state and the leadership committed itself to make warm peace with the Kingdom's western neighbour. The treaty restored to Jordan land Israel occupied following the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars and gave the Jordanian more access to the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers water. Jordan saw the peace treaty as the best way to save the Kingdom from the political and economic hardships from which it had been suffering since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and war, when the U.S., many European countries and Gulf states boycotted the Kingdom for its perceived pro-Iraq stance.

His Majesty King Hussein, in answer to criticism by some neighbouring countries like Syria, said that Jordan will not "lag behind" in the region's peace march, especially that under the peace accord, Jordan's water and territorial rights have been restored.

If anything, by ending hostile relations with its immediate neighbours, Jordan would be more equipped to play a pivotal role in shaping a new regional order under peace, politicians say.

"Jordan's movement on the regional front has assumed a fresh momentum," says one well-placed politician, adding, however, that it is a new one that may involve "a transformation in the Kingdom's political thinking moving away from the Arab hemisphere towards a more Western-oriented orbit."

"Jordan wants to move ahead towards the establishment of a regional order, in which Israel is a major actor, rather than being confined in the framework of an Arab-Arab order," says the politician, adding that while this "new policy" could offend states like Syria, it would serve the Kingdom positively in terms of improving relations with the Gulf states, which "are part of the Western hemisphere themselves."

Like-minded analysts agree that Jordan "has become a major actor in shaping a new regional order."

They point out, nevertheless, that "the consequences of such a direction are still unpredictable, particularly in the absence of a clear picture of where the new policy would place the Kingdom in an overall regional context."

Politicians point out that through the newly cultivated political affiliation with the West Jordan was given leeway to "be more vocal about certain issues like Iraq."

Jordan has expressed a desire to see a change in Iraq following the defection last August of Iraq's top military weapons expert Hussein Kamel.

"I have a conviction that what we need in Iraq most is for us to get credible representatives of the three major components of Iraq's people... a federated Iraq might be the answer," King Hussein has said.

While the peace treaty has given Jordan global political recognition, with leaders from all over the world hailing the Kingdom's "brave peace moves," Jordanians,

though in support of ending the state of war with Israel, are impatient for tangible peace dividends, which, experts say, have not yet materialised, for more than one reason.

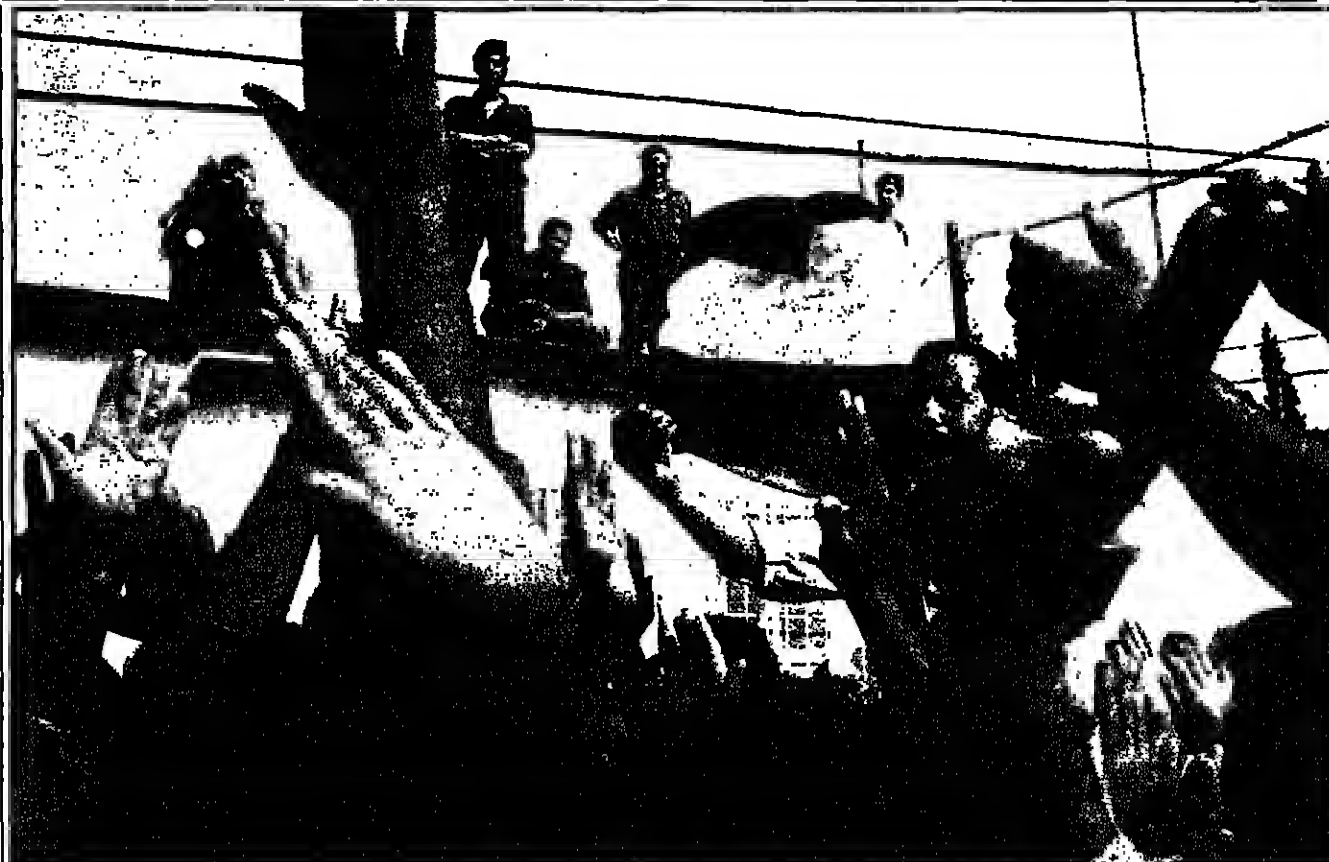
One of these reasons is what an economic expert describes as "the new attitude by rich countries towards state-welfare systems."

"Jordan was not and will not be showered with millions for signing a peace treaty with Israel like Egypt was," says the economist, adding that a new economic rehabilitation policy is being introduced where economic prosperity should be reinvigorated from within rather than from without to equip it to deal with a broader sense of regional cooperation.

Jordan is not pinning its hopes solely on American investment or assistance. Instead, the vision was very broad based, providing for cooperation and interaction with all interested parties on the basis of a clearly economic programme with definite objectives in sight. HRH Crown Prince Hassan has said.

While such a policy will be beneficial to the national economy of the Kingdom in the

(Continued on page 3)



Palestinians on Wednesday celebrate the beginning of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank town of Jenin as Israeli soldiers watch from a rooftop (Reuters photo)

Israelis begin Jenin pullout

JENIN (Agencies) — Palestinian police arrived on Wednesday to take over Jenin, raising their rifles in triumph at the beginning of the end of Israel's 28-year occupation of West Bank cities.

Hundreds of cheering Palestinians greeted the five police officers and their Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) escorts, who pulled up to a new Israeli-PLO liaison office on the outskirts of Jenin at midday.

"Abu Ammar — continue the march of liberation," the crowd chanted, invoking the nom de guerre of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. "We are following you."

A senior Israeli army official said meanwhile that the first elections to a Palestinian self-rule council, planned for Jan.

20, were likely to be delayed for "technical reasons."

"The elections will probably not take place on January 20 as planned for technical reasons," General Oren Shahor, coordinator of Israeli activities in the Palestinian territories, told parliament's foreign and defence committee.

The officer, quoted on state radio, said the Palestinians had already started to prepare for the polls which are to follow an Israeli redeployment in the West Bank.

In a move which could hold up the redeployment, the government ordered a halt to work on the Sabbath on the construction of ring-roads for West Bank settlers.

The decision was taken under pressure from religious groups. The roads are de-

signed to allow settlers to travel safely back and forth from Israel by-passing Palestinian areas.

The Palestinian officers' arrival in Jenin on Wednesday marked what Israel said was the start of its troop redeployment in the West Bank after the signing last month in Washington of a deal expanding self-rule beyond the Gaza Strip and Jericho enclave.

Mr. Arafat, in a Washington TV interview, predicted an independent Palestinian state within two years.

Jenin, in the northern West Bank, is to be the first city handed over to Palestinian self-rule under the Sept. 28 accord. Israel will also transfer civilian authority and limited security responsibility in some 450 villages to the

PLO. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Israel aimed to complete the pull-out from the cities of Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Kalkila, Ramallah and Tulkarm by Jan. 1 ahead of Palestinian elections.

The army plans to leave parts of Hebron by March, but will remain in some sectors of the city to protect 400 Jewish settlers. Israel handed over Gaza and Jericho 17 months ago.

Accompanied by Brigadier-General Ziad Al Atrash, head of the Palestinian side of the Israel-PLO security liaison committee, the five policemen — all liaison officers — drove to the Jenin area from Jericho in a jeep convoy.

Qadhafi declares halt to expulsions

SIRTE (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi suspended the expulsion of Palestinians on Wednesday and authorised the return of 1,000 people stranded on Egypt's border but warned a new crisis could erupt.

"We are going to give the Arabs and the world a last chance," Colonel Qadhafi told a press conference in Sirte, his administrative capital.

"We are going to try to convince the Palestinians to stay in Libya for a period of three to six months despite their insistence on the right to return" to their homeland. But he warned: "If this deadline expires without the world recognising the right of all the diaspora Palestinians to return to their land, that means that in three to six months we will again see thousands and thousands of people at Salloum (border post), on the sea, and on the road to Palestine."

The Libyan leader announced a campaign to expel the 30,000 Palestinians in his country at the start of September to show what he said was the failure of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accords to provide a viable Palestinian homeland. Since then more than 5,000 Palestinians have been thrown out of Libya. Around 1,000 are stranded in a camp in no-man's land between the Libyan and Egyptian borders

after being refused entry by Cairo.

Col. Qadhafi confirmed, however, that he would press ahead with a parallel campaign to expel 1.12 million Africans working without papers in Libya, saying the decision had been taken by his country's people's congresses.

"Would Chad, Niger, Egypt or Tunisia accept 100,000 or 250,000 Libyans entering their country without papers or identity cards?" he asked, defending the decision.

Libya, which is hit by a U.N. air traffic embargo, has between 1.5 million and two million foreigners. Col. Qadhafi's decision to expel around one million of them, by road in the absence of U.N. authorisation for special flights, has led international aid workers to voice fears of a humanitarian catastrophe in the making.

But the Arab League praised the Libyan leader for calling a halt to the expulsion of Palestinians and allowing those stranded on the border with Egypt to return for a temporary period.

"The league welcomes Qadhafi's decision to return the expelled Palestinian in order to care for their humanitarian conditions," Arab League Secretary General Esmat Meguid told reporters.

Jordan and Israel sign trade accord

SODOM (Agencies) — Israel and Jordan on Wednesday signed a trade accord which will enable them to begin doing business, a year after they signed a peace treaty.

Trade ministers from the two countries Jordan's Ali Abul Ragheb and Israel's Micha Harish, signed the long-delayed accord at a resort hotel at Sodom on Israel's side of the Dead Sea. Mr. Harish said the smaller Jordanian economy would benefit more from the agreement.

"This agreement clearly is aimed at stimulating the Jordanian economy and at proving how the peace process brings success to the Jordanian economy," Mr. Harish told Israel Radio.

"We clearly see this as something in Israel's interest," he said, adding that if Jordan's economy began to grow, it would become an "interesting" market for Israeli exports in four or five years.

After the ceremony, hundreds of helium-filled balloons were released and guests were treated to slices from a cake decorated with doves.

"On the shores of the Dead Sea we create life," Mr. Harish proclaimed.

"This agreement is a practical approach to developing peace between our two peoples," said Mr. Abul Ragheb.

"It is quite clear Jordan and Israel are proceeding with peace in a serious and irreversible manner."

Under the agreement, Israel will grant 20 to 50 per cent exemptions from customs on most Jordanian industrial products, including cement, furniture, foodstuffs, antenae, pharmaceuticals and toys.

Jordan will grant a 10 per cent reduction in tariffs to a range of Israeli imports, including plywood, tyres, foodstuffs, electronic components, medical and communications equipment and pharmaceuticals.

The trade agreement takes into account the size difference between Israel's and Jordan's economies.

The tariff reductions will be in effect for three years, after which they will be renegotiated.

Israeli officials said Jordan has been reluctant to commit itself to setting up a joint free trade zone, as mentioned in the 1994 peace treaty. The trade pact defers decision, saying the two sides will hold further negotiations on the matter.

Israel's industry and trade ministry said 200 Israeli companies have advised it of plans to do business with Jordan. The ministry said it knows of dozens of Jordanians interested in the Israeli market.

Combined agency dispatches

THE ARAB World on Wednesday bitterly denounced the U.S. Congress' decision to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, warning that it threatens the Middle East peace process.

The Jordan Parliament declared: "The irresponsible position of the U.S. Congress poses danger to Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, intimidates the feelings of Muslims world-wide, strips the United States of its role as an honest broker and builds up tension and suspicion in the whole region."

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by May 31, 1999, the end of the five-year interim period of Palestinian self-

rule.

"This irresponsible act could jeopardise the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and provoke the feelings of Muslims worldwide," the Lower House of Parliament said in a statement.

It warned that the vote "places the whole region in a state of uncertainty and tension, and prevents the United States from being an honest broker" in its role as co-sponsor of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"We reject the U.S. drive to offer Jerusalem as capital of Israel in contradiction with international legitimacy," the 80-seat Parliament said. "We abide by the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly resolutions relating to Jerusalem."

The Arab League denounced the U.S. Congress decision, warning it could destroy the peace process and

cause a new cycle of violence.

The decision "provokes the feelings of Muslims and Christians alike in the Arab and Islamic world and takes away much of the credibility of the peace process," Arab League head Esmat Abdul Meguid said in a written statement.

"Its adoption at such a time as this will impede the peace process and threaten it with collapse and an increase of tension and extremism in the region," Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) called for U.N. intervention and an Arab summit in protest at the U.S. Congress vote.

Samir Ghoshe, a PLO Executive Committee member, said the U.S. vote was "a time-bomb capable of blowing up the whole peace process."

resolutions which consider East Jerusalem as part of the territories occupied in 1967," Mr. Ghoshe told AFP.

"We have to mobilise the Arab World and hold an Arab summit as soon as possible, given the serious consequences of this law on the future of the region," said the labour minister in the Palestinian National Authority.

"This issue must also be raised before the U.N. Security Council to find the means to safeguard the peace process," he said.

Bani Hamida

Fall Exhibition

"Winds of Change"

details page 3

Lebanon urges foreign aid for ex-drug farmers

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon is threatening to declare the Baalbek-Hermel region, where drugs flourished during the civil war, a "disaster area" unless donor countries keep their promise to provide farmers with funds for substitute crops.

"The decision to eradicate hashish and poppy crops is irreversible. Donor countries must keep their promises and give us \$40 million before the end of October," Lebanese Agriculture Minister Shawk Fakhouri told AFP.

In June, representatives of 17 Western and Arab countries, including the United States and the European Union, met with officials from the U.N. Development Programme and decided to grant Lebanon aid to grow alternative crops in the eastern Bekaa Valley region.

But the cash has been slow in coming because of administrative foot-dragging Mr. Fakhouri said.

"Farmers in the Baalbek-Hermel region have traditionally been poor. During the war their per capita revenue stood at \$1,000 but now it has fallen to \$400," Mr. Fakhouri said.

"We'll be forced to declare this region a disaster area unless a solution is forthcoming," he said.

He stressed that farmers in the Bekaa Valley, who have repeatedly threatened to resume growing the illicit crops, were angry and bitter over the "ridiculous financial assistance" granted them so far.

The authorities are now struggling to keep them from planting cannabis and poppies again, he said.

In 1994 the Lebanese government and the United Nations signed a \$4.2-million deal to help farmers grow other crops in place of hashish and poppies in the Bekaa.

"Small farmers have actually only received \$1.15 million of the total amount, including 65 per cent in seeds and 35 per cent in loans of \$1,000 and \$2,000," Mr. Fakhouri said.

The rest of the \$4.2 million was spent on studies, equipment and leasing sites, he said.

Mr. Fakhouri expects the 1996-2000 phase of the rural development programme for the Baalbek-Hermel region to cost \$52.8 million, including \$33.9 million for the first two years.

"Lebanon is ready to spend \$4 million while the U.N. has pledged \$2.6 million but donor countries have yet to say how much they will each contribute," he said.

The cultivation, sale and consumption of hashish was a traditional activity of the Baalbek-Hermel region, and the illicit trade of cannabis and poppies flourished during Lebanon's 15-year civil war which ended in 1990.

A year later Lebanon, in cooperation with the Syrian intelligence services, launched a massive campaign to eradicate the cultivation of poppies and hashish.

But desperate and impoverished farmers continued to grow drugs in remote parts of the rugged Hermel.

The Lebanese authorities still frequently report the destruction of the illicit crops and the arrests of drug traffickers.

According to a Lebanese report drawn up in cooperation with the United Nations, only 40,000 hectares of the 264,000-hectare Baalbek-Hermel region is farmed because of the small amount of rainfall there.

Cannabis was once grown on some 16,000 hectares of land while poppies covered about 5,000 hectares.

Japan seeks ways to save Lebanon's Biblical cedar trees

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Japanese delegation is visiting Lebanon to seek ways of helping the authorities here preserve its ailing national symbol, the thousands-year-old cedar tree, the Japanese embassy said.

The team headed by Yoshinori Yasuda, a professor at Japan's International Culture Research Centre, represents the 300-strong "International Society of Lebanon Cedar," a non-governmental organisation set up in Tokyo in June.

The delegation held talks with Agriculture Minister Shawk Fakhouri on Monday and announced that a shipment of pesticides and equipment worth \$300,000 will arrive in Beirut for the cedar tree next week.

Mr. Yasuda said Japan wanted to share with Lebanon its successful experiences in treating ailing trees and reforestation.

The society has launched a media campaign in Japan to attract interest and contributions to help Lebanon save the cedar tree, which figure on the Lebanese flag, from extinction. Some 50 trees are 6,000 years old.

Another team of Japanese experts was expected next week in Lebanon to diagnose and doctor the trees, Mr. Yasuda said.

The Japanese society is one of several groups here and abroad devoted to saving the cedar tree and is the latest team from Japan to visit Lebanon amid a growing interest in Tokyo for post-war reconstruction efforts.

A Japanese funding agency team is also visiting Beirut to appraise water projects while a private government-backed economic delegation was due here for talks with financial officials, Japanese sources said.

In March the Institut des Sciences Agricoles of Beauvais, north of Paris, announced that 10 French researchers were to look for ways to regenerate Lebanon's cedar trees through a cloning process.

Professor Christine de Villar, who heads the research, said the Lebanese cedar tree, the most fragile and impressive of four categories of cedars in the world, were on the decline.

There were only 13 areas left nationwide in Lebanon where cedars still grow, she said.



A Palestinian boy wields two Yasser Arafat balloons to celebrate the beginning of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank town of Jenin (AFP photo)

Settlers grim as Palestinians celebrate

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (AFP) — Jewish settlers admitted they faced a bleak future on Wednesday as the Israeli army started to withdraw from the nearby West Bank town of Jenin to the cheers of its Palestinian residents.

"We're in the shit, while they party," sighed Avner Silvani, a 50-year-old retired soldier who now drives a mini-bus.

"It's humiliating to see all those Palestinian flags," he said, pointing from the settlement of Kadim down to the suburbs of the town less than 300 metres away.

Young Israeli army recruits, armed with assault rifles, stood guard in front of the electrified gate at the entrance to Kadim, which is set among pine trees.

Together with another hill-top settlement called Ganim, barely 60 Jewish families live near Jenin and its 35,000 Palestinians.

Mr. Silvani, who set up home in 1984 with the first settlers, a group of secular sympathisers of the right-wing Likud bloc, points at 30 empty homes which the ruling Labour Party refuses to put up for sale.

"We feel it's all over. There's no future for us," he said.

Mr. Silvani said residents felt "insulted" when the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin pointed out it was costing the state an average \$250,000 a year per family to protect the Jenin settlements.

"Some people have asked for compensation (to leave) but, ironically, the authorities said it was better to stay put for the time being. It's about time our leaders put their cards on the table," he said.

Mr. Rabin has pledged not to dismantle any settlements before talks on the final status of the Palestinian territories scheduled to start by May 1996.

In contrast to the resigned mood in Kadim, around 30 settlers on Wednesday occupied a hill near Bethlehem to protest the start of the army's redeployment from Palestinian towns under the Sept. 28

West Bank autonomy accord.

The 39-year-old secretary of the Kadim settlers' council, Monsomego David, was also bitter about the West Bank deal and his main fear was over security.

"We don't know how the Palestinian police will behave but they're not the only ones we're worried about. It's the extremists who could use Jenin as a base for anti-Israeli operations," he said.

"The only thing that separates us from Jenin is a wire fence. The army did not want to put up a proper electrified barricade," said David.

He said the ring-road built by the army to allow Kadim and Ganim settlers to travel to Israel, seven kilometres away, without going through Jenin was "an improvement, but it will not stop us being targets of attack."

In Ganim, 43-year-old teacher Sarah Cohen said she was not alarmed by the start of the deployment of

Palestinian police in Jenin, where Israel's withdrawal is to be staggered over the next three weeks.

"It's not a special day. The soldiers are on guard," she said.

But she pointed out that "it was the government which encouraged us to come here. It was not an ideology (of biblical Greater Israel) but the quality of life which was the main factor behind our decision."

"But if the state now orders us to evacuate, we will go because we will accept its democratic decision, however painful."

By the end of December, Tulkarem, Nablus, Kalkilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem are also due to have been handed over to Palestinian control to allow elections to a self-rule council.

Special arrangements have been made for the flashpoint West Bank town of Hebron where soldiers will remain to protect 400 settlers living among 120,000 Palestinians.

Text of White House statement on Jerusalem

NEW YORK (AFP) — Here is the text of a White House statement issued after Congress passed a bill to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It was issued in New York where President Bill Clinton attended a U.N. session.

"The president opposed this legislation. He is convinced its passage at this sensitive time in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations is a mistake.

"The president said, 'we have made more progress in less time in the Middle East peace process over the last two years than at any time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A step such as this could hinder the peace process. I will not let this happen, and will use the legislation's waiver authority to avoid damage to the peace process.'"

"The president's personal views on Jerusalem are a matter of public record and have not changed. His record of friendship and support for Israel is clear and of long standing. But he remains convinced that it is unwise for the United States to take action that could be interpreted as prejudging sensitive matters such as Jerusalem that the parties themselves have agreed should be decided in the final status talks."

"The legislation passed this week contradicts that principle. As such the president would not have hesitated under different circumstances to veto it. But given the virtually unanimous votes by which these bills were adopted, exercising that option in this case would not alter the outcome; (it) would only prolong a divisive debate and risk further damage to the peace process."

"The president will not, however, sign this legislation. To do so would be inconsistent with his pledge to take no action which would undermine a peace process that shows so much promise of creating a better future for Israel and its neighbours."

"Therefore when the bills passed this week became law, the president will use their waiver provisions to prevent that legislation from adversely affecting the Middle East peace process."

"The Clinton administration will continue to be a strong and fair-minded partner in support of all those who take risks for peace. President Clinton will not allow the legislation passed this week to interfere with that role."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pollard wins victory toward citizenship

TEL AVIV (AP) — Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard took a first hurdle in gaining Israeli citizenship Wednesday when the supreme court ordered the government to explain why it turned down his initial request, his lawyer said.

Mr. Pollard, arrested in 1985, is serving a life prison term in the United States for spying for Israel. Mr. Pollard applied for Israeli citizenship earlier this year, attempting to improve his chance of winning early release at a January parole hearing. The Israeli interior ministry said at the time that Israel does not normally grant citizenship to Jews until they immigrate. Mr. Pollard appealed to the supreme court. On Wednesday, the high court ordered the government to explain in 30 days why it should not give the former U.S. naval intelligence analyst Israeli citizenship. "This is a victory for Pollard," said his lawyer, Larry Dub. "The court could have thrown out the case, but the fact that they took it upon itself to grant the show-cause order means they saw merit in our petition."

Emir of Qatar to visit Oman

DOHA (R) — The emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, will pay a three-day visit to Oman on Saturday at the invitation of Sultan Qaboos, an official statement said on Wednesday. It said the visit would be in "reaffirmation of the importance of ties linking brothers, and an attempt to strengthen and develop them in a way opening new horizons of cooperation..."

Sheikh Hamad and Sultan Qaboos would exchange views on the situation and developments in the region and the Arab arena, it added. Qatar and Oman, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council whose leaders are scheduled to hold a summit meeting in Oman in December. Sheikh Hamad, who succeeded his father, Sheikh Khalifa, in a palace coup in June, last visited Oman in September to congratulate Sultan Qaboos on surviving a car accident.

German court refuses compensation for 11 Israelis

MUNICH (AFP) — A Munich court on Wednesday refused compensation to 22 legal claimants of 11 Israeli victims who died in the hostage crisis at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972. The trial will continue for five of the families seeking damages, a court official said, adding that further consideration will be given to three other claimants. Claimants for the 11 Israeli athletes killed Sept. 5, 1972 argued that German security services failed in their duty and asked the German government 40 million marks (\$28 million) in compensation.

Egypt's election campaign claims first victim

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's parliamentary election campaign claimed its first casualty on Tuesday, but the culprit was not the partisan brawls that traditionally accompany the vote. It was a lamp-post. Nariman Sami Sadeq, 27, was killed when the lamp-post fell on her as campaign workers were hanging a banner from it in the Rod Al Farag neighbourhood of Cairo, police said. Sadeq had arrived in Egypt for a short visit from Italy, where she lived for eight years and was travelling with her husband. Elections are due on Nov. 29.

OAU chairman assails Sudan government

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The current Sudanese government is "a factor of instability in the region," and "does not look like a government that can be reformed," the current Organisation of African Unity (OAU) chairman recently stressed to a Washington foreign affairs audience.

Speaking at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told Africanists, diplomats, development specialists, and the press that the current Sudanese government is "perhaps one of the main factors of instability in the region," and, as such, has few friends.

Rhetorically, asking himself if the government can be reformed, Mr. Meles answered: "I had hoped against hope that this would be possible. But over the past few months, I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that this government does not look like a government that can be reformed."

"Do I think that peace can be achieved through dialogue in the Sudan?" he further asked. "We tried it. So far, we have not succeeded."

"We have what we call the IGADD (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development) initiative. Four countries in the region — Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda — formed a group to try to help the peace process in the Sudan."

"These peace talks have now been stalled because we feel the government in the Sudan thinks it can dictate the terms of peace in the Sudan," he said.

"Until and unless they change their stance," he emphatically stressed, "I do not see how peace can be achieved through dialogue, and it appears that it will be very difficult for them to

change their stance. Therefore, it appears at this stage that the path of dialogue does not look all that promising."

Mr. Meles then went on to comment on Sudan's alleged involvement in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who was in Addis Ababa attending an OAU summit at the time of the attack.

"The Sudanese government has violated the sovereignty of Ethiopia by participating in the planning and execution of the attempted assassination of President Mubarak," the OAU chairman charged. "We have already taken measures — in the sense that we have taken up the issue in the OAU conflict resolution mechanism," he noted.

"We are very glad that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the OAU, the OAU has taken a very strong and principled position on

this issue. The OAU has called on Sudan to surrender the three terrorists that we believe are being sheltered in Khartoum. The OAU has also instructed its secretary-general to communicate with the Sudanese government and report his findings..."

"We are waiting for that report, before considering... other legal options" as members of the international community, Mr. Meles said.

"We are looking into the possibilities of taking our case to appropriate international institutions," he stressed.

Mr. Meles was in Washington — along with other African leaders — to attend the annual Africare Bishop John T. Walker Memorial Dinner. President Bill Clinton attended a reception preceding the Africare event and addressed those present, and also met with the African leaders.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
13:00 Iris — The Happy Professor
13:20 Fireman Sam
13:30 My Secret Identity
14:00 Mountain Men
14:50 The New Leave It to Beaver
15:30 Gillette World Sport Special
16:00 White Heat
17:00 Children's Programme: Cocotte Minusc
17:30 Varieties and game show — Le Monde Est à Vous
19:00 News in French
19:00 News in French
19:30 Magazine — Archimède
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 The Album Show
20:30 National Geographic
21:10
Drama — The New Avengers
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature Film — "The Men"
23:50 The Thorn Birds

PRAYER TIMES
04:25 Fajr
07:43 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:20 Dhuhr
14:28 'Asr
17:57 Maghrib
18:14 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swidieh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Trinitarian Church Tel. 623666.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 622826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Assyrian International Church Tel. 625226.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 81295

WEATHER
Bulatin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Relative warm and dry weather conditions will prevail during the weekend with temperatures five degrees centigrade above average and winds south easterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be dusty and hot with winds southerly moderate and seas rough.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 16/31

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 21/38
Deserts 15/33
Jordan Valley 21/37

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 29 Aqaba 37, Humidity readings: Amman 23 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawalidh 736011
Dr. Wisam Hazin 779474
Dr. Father Bilal 663412
Dr. Bilal Al Sayid 890280
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 776336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 640445
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohamed Al Khalili 273099
Al Oudh pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Taraz Hijawi 985445
Khalil Maternity, J. Ann 6442816

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 62111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 890390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 877111
Complaints 877111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53320
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53320

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Ann 6442816

Akileh Maternity, J. Ann. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Elmarka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900640
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909090
IRBID:
Paseia Bona Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)271100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) and the department at the Queen Alia Int.

International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
03:25 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
04:30 Aden (RJ)
07:15 Sana'a (RJ)
08:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:35 Beirut (RJ)
09:35 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:10 Colombo (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 London (RJ)
17:30 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
17:30 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
18:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
18:15 Athens (RJ)
19:20 Al Ain (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)
23:15 Larissa (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
12:40 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:00 Doha (QF)
16:10 Dubai (EK)
17:40 Rome (AZ)
18:45 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:35 Cairo (MS)
20:10 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:40 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
11:00 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:10 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
12:25 Athens (RJ)
12:25 London (RJ)
19:35 Larissa (RJ)
20:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (RJ)
23:00 Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
01:00 Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (add) (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Muscat (GF)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:40 Doha (QF)
17:15 Damascus, Dubai (QF)
20:25 Cairo (MS)
02:35 Amsterdam (KL)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 200/140
Carrot 200/140
Cauliflower 200/140
Cucumbers (large) 200/150
Cucumbers (small) 340/240
Eggplant 220/150
Garlic 600/500
Grapes 250/150
Lemon 200/160
Marrow (large) 140/90
Marrow (small) 230/160
Olives (green) 420/320
Onion (dry) 250/150
Orange 500/400
Pepper (hot) 200/150
Pepper (sweet) 200/150
Pomegranate 380/260
Potato 340/250
Spinach 220/120
String Beans 760/600
Tangerine 300/180
Tomato 110/70
Spinach 240/140

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:30 p.m. every Sunday

Home News

SSC finalises amendment plan to improve pension payments

AMMAN (Petra)—A comprehensive plan for amending the Social Security Corporation (SSC) law which came into being 17 years ago this month, has been finalised, according to Director General of the SSC Safwan Toukan.

The plan will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval, he said.

Dr. Toukan told a press conference Wednesday that the plan is to be submitted as part of the country's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 60th birthday on Nov. 14.

It will deal mainly with improving pension pay-

ments to beneficiaries. The amendments will serve as the King's gift to his people on this anniversary.

Developments in the basic principles of the SSC and its regulations are taken into account, Dr. Toukan said.

The SSC has benefited from similar laws in foreign and more advanced nations, according to Dr. Toukan.

Currently, the draft amendment to the law, which is being revised by a special team before its submission to the cabinet, covers the system of calculating pensions for beneficiaries and the inclusion of

various public sectors in the SSC law, Dr. Toukan said.

Since Sept. 30 of last year, the SSC has collected JD 80.6 million which it has put into investments in various businesses for income earnings for the beneficiaries, according to Dr. Toukan.

The SSC has so far invested JD 722.2 million, more than 50 per cent of which are deposits in banks, in public shareholding shares and in real estate.

SSC investments in tourist facilities like Amra, Petra and Aqaba Hotel yield high profits, he added.

The corporation's rest-

houses will be commissioned to private sector organisations with the view to obtaining higher financial benefits, Dr. Toukan said.

Last year the corporation invested JD 97 million in industrial, insurance, banking and services sectors in an effort to increase and diversify its investments, according to the general director.

The SSC now covers 789,876 beneficiaries employed by 10,196 institutions, Dr. Toukan said.

'ESCWA role in MENA is to re-direct future programmes'

AMMAN (Petra)—The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will attend the upcoming Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference on Oct. 29 only in observer status, the executive representative of the organisation, Hazem Behlawi said Wednesday.

Dr. Behlawi said that as a regional organisation it has no direct role to play in the meeting.

But Dr. Behlawi said that he will deliver the address of the UN Secretary General to the conference and will chair a seminar held within a workshop on

investments in the region to be attended by the conference delegates.

He described the conference as a qualitative step forward and as a contribution to the improvement of relations among regional countries.

ESCWA's programmes in the next two years will be geared towards recommendations and resolutions taken by the conference, Dr. Behlawi said.

ESCWA will also be giving due attention to projects in transport, water and the environment as well as schemes designed to promote the economies of the

region, he added.

The world community's recognition of Jordan's pivotal role in the region is reflected by the fact that the MENA conference is held in Jordan, and is bound to have beneficial effects on the Kingdom's economy, Dr. Behlawi said.

He said the conference will be an opportunity for Jordan to present its image to the world as a stable and secure country and make itself eligible to play the role of a strong economic centre for the region, Dr. Behlawi said.

The world's interest in the conference implies the

world community is genuinely concerned with peace-building efforts.

Meanwhile, the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) announced Wednesday that a Japanese delegation to the MENA conference will hold a meeting with JBA members on Saturday to promote economic relations between Jordanian and Japanese private sectors.

According to a JBA statement the 35-strong Japanese delegation represent banks, research centres and financial institutions, as well as business companies.

Jordan assembles its first vehicle

(Continued from page 12)

the expansion of two Jordanian industrial cities in view of the growing demand for investments in them.

The Regent visited Al Ram pharmaceutical plant, which was established with capital from Jordanian expatriates returning from the Gulf region, and was briefed on its work and production as well as plans for development.

The Regent also stopped at the Advanced Technological Engineering Company which produces casts for plastics and steel plates, and also Ram Company.

Approach to summit

Later on Wednesday, the Regent defined the Jordanian principles on which the country was participating in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference beginning on Sunday and stressed the need for projecting the Jordanian achievements in the different sectors and reflecting the good image to the world.

He said that Jordan had to present its achievements under democracy to the delegates representing more than 63 nations. Jordan is seeking not only to present its efforts and successes to the confer-

ence but seeking to achieve further successes beyond the coming event, he said.

The Regent was addressing an audience of representatives of the private and public sectors in the MENA conference along with the heads of committees preparing for the meeting.

He called on the Jordanian delegates and officials to work in a team and so present the best image of Jordan's achievements and skill and efficiency to the world.

The Regent called on all Jordanians to back the public and private sectors' efforts to help the conference attain success.

New computer programme spotlights Kingdom

By Cathy King
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — This week saw the launch of the first multi-media tourism computer programme on Jordan, which was specifically developed for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

The programme was developed "from scratch" by a group of companies for the Ministry of Tourism, a ministry official told the Jordan Times.

The ministry tendered the project that was won in May by Computer Communication Systems (CCS) and which consequently sub-contracted a few other companies, including Integrated Technology Group (ITG) and EPOCH, Ministry of Tourism computer engineer Ammar Huneiti said in an interview.

The programme is another drive at marketing Jordan's tourist attractions. It is divided under subject

headings, comprising: general information; history; monarchy; culture; religion; sites; economy; and services.

Each category is subdivided and is accompanied by animation, soundtracks, videos and/or still photographs.

"Something like this should not be produced by one company but by a group (of companies)," Mr. Huneiti said.

He explained that while CCS provided the hardware, ITG and EPOCH developed the software and gathered the data.

ITG Managing Director Waleed Tahab said ITG had formerly created their own multi-media programme, which was then used to generate the ministry's programme, entitled: "The Ministry of Tourism presents, Jordan Tourist Information."

"Sometime ago, we (at ITG) created WAVE, our own multi-media package, which we used to generate

this project. Usually, other companies (in Jordan) use a third party package, like Fox Pro," Mr. Tahab said.

Fox Pro is an internationally recognised trade mark for various software packages.

The operational programme is located in several of Amman's international hotels, housed in a booth easily identified by the melody emanating from it.

An additional feature is a voice-over narrating the text on each of the topics, but both the voice-over and soundtracks may be muted.

The tender was valued at JD 300,000, said Mr. Huneiti, who added that this sum would also include two other phases of the project.

The next phase would be development of an extended version of the same programme to be produced on compact disc with four language options.

This, Mr. Huneiti said, should be available by Jan-

uary 1, 1996.

The third and final phase will be the adaptation of the project for its inclusion on the Internet, which should be completed by next July with two further languages added, according to Mr. Huneiti.

For the time being the programme operates in English only and is controlled via a touch-tone screen.

In total there will be 20 booths, and beyond the hotels, they will be placed in the various venues of the economic summit. After the summit the booths will be redistributed around Amman and tourism information centres, he said.

Mr. Tahab said he believed that ITG was chosen because of its versatility and previous experience in similar projects.

"ITG has its own camera equipment, sound lab and engineer and mixer. It's like a small T.V. station," he said, and added: "Even though we do not have an

editing room, we have the equipment to manipulate six videos and four soundtracks simultaneously, to produce the cuts we want."

Mr. Huneiti told the Jordan Times that a follow-up committee was drawn up of members from the Royal Court, the Ministry of Tourism, the National Information Centre, the Amman Financial Market and the Royal Scientific Society. The committee verified all the data contained within the programme.

"Once the whole project is finished," said Mr. Tahab, "the job of selling and distributing the project will be with the Ministry of Tourism," he said explaining that the rights to the programme belong to the ministry. For ITG, the project, Mr. Tahab said, is an investment meant to demonstrate the company's capabilities.

Jordan-Israel peace treaty - one year on

(Continued from page 1)

long term, it will not make a difference for ordinary Jordanians in the short term, economists argue.

"I cannot see any immediate benefits for normal Jordanians, said a former official, adding that "the rich will grow richer while the poor will grow poorer."

However promising the future image for Jordan's economy may look, ordinary Jordanians today are growing more frustrated with the lack of tangible peace dividends; some have grown totally skeptical that peacemaking will have any effect, negative be it or positive, on their standard of living.

"Listen, they make peace today, I sell cigarettes; they make war tomorrow, I will still sell cigarettes," says Sabri who hawks customers in one of Shmeisani's bustling streets.

Despite the disappointment of the lack of "cash-flow" into the Kingdom after the peace treaty was signed, there have been a few achievements for Jordan resulting from the accord: Israel has a strong ally for Jordan in Washington where it helped secure a debt write-off for the Kingdom and is now lobbying for a massive arms deal which might even see surplus F-16 warplanes given to Jordan after upgrading and training programmes are carried out in the Jewish state, diplomats say.

Also, an early trickle of tourism has now turned into a veritable two-way flood. Over 75,000 Israelis crossed into Jordan in guided tours in the first eight months of 1995. In the same period, some 33,000 Jordanians crossed into Israel and both figures are expected to rise next month when a transport agreement is signed allowing citizens to cross the border in private cars.

While the ability to travel

freely to a neighboring country is a boon to both sides, the tourism trade, nevertheless, cannot hide the lack of economic cooperation between the two countries.

No goods are passing between the two countries and no ventures have reached the implementation phase. "The first year of open relations between the two sides has been wasted," the Israeli Maariv daily wrote recently.

But some Jordanian and Israeli economic experts are not worried and say that the two sides have been learning about each other, with Jordanians learning to deal with the aggressive tactics of many Israeli companies, and these firms also learning not to intimidate their potential Arab partners, many of whom fear that Israel will soon take over the economy of the Middle East.

This optimistic outlook, however, is not shared by all Jordanians as peace opponents continue to oppose any kind of normalisation of relations with Israel and have not given up the idea of aborting the one-year-old peace treaty, which was ratified after being endorsed by two-thirds of Jordanian deputies.

"The executive committee of the popular (anti-normalisation) conference holds on to your (citizens') right to abort the treaty and its relevant agreements and regulations, as well as stand up to all policies of normalisation relations with the state of usurpation," said a statement issued by the executive committee of the anti-normalisation conference.

made up from the Islamist-led coalition of 11 opposition parties.

"On this day last year the Wadi Araba agreement was signed... not only to end the state of war between Jordan and the state of usurpation but also to stipulate in its sub-agreements and provisions a special relationship to reach the point of alliance," said that statement, urging Jordanians to "stand up to the measures intended to abolish Jordanians' identity and uproot their Arab and Islamic surroundings."

With the sub-agreements between the two sides almost finalised, both the Jordanian and Israeli governments plan to utilise these accords to the benefit of both sides after the reality of peace has been established.

"Much will depend on the ability the private sector and (people) to utilise these agreements" for their own benefit," says Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Shimon Shamir.

"We don't want to impose normalisation, we don't want to do anything Jordanians are not ready for, what we are doing is peace building... as time passes, reality (of peace) will be stronger."

The Jordanian leadership, on the other hand, would like to see the evolution of "cultural peace" which Prince Hassan described as "moving from a stage of comprehension to understanding each other's position (to) work on a concept of sharing values... I am talking about decency, integrity and human values on both sides."

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Ex-activists tell why they think today's political parties are failing

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan political parties have failed, so far, to leave a significant impact on the social, economic and political life of the country, and their focus has been on slogans which have lost their mass appeal, according to three former Baath activists.

In a seminar, hosted by the International and Islamic Centre for Research and Information, entitled "Political Parties After Three Years of Legislation", contemporary Middle East historian Ali Mahafzah, blamed political parties for the "sad" situation of the country.

Dr. Mahafzah, who is a former president of Yarmouk University and currently teaches history at the University of Jordan, said political parties

were incompetent in designing practical programmes, that exceed verbal promises.

"Jordanians do not join political parties because these parties failed to inspire any hope for change," he said, comparing political parties of the 1950's with those of today.

The simple aims of political parties have not been accomplished in Jordan, said former Baath party leader Hussein Mjeli.

They have failed in becoming the bridge between the government and citizens, he stressed.

These parties will not accomplish anything, he said, because they are based on sectarian, factional, or religious principles, said Mr. Mjeli, a former deputy of the 11th Parliament.

Participant Fayez Hourani said the lack of influence and weakness of Jordanian political parties led to the strengthening of the executive authority.

"They (political parties) were unable to confront political changes such as the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty," he said.

He added that it was unfair to assess political parties without a deep understanding of the way in which these parties were established.

"Moving from martial law to democracy in a short period of time resulted in fragile and dependent parties," Dr. Hourani said.

Jordan has 20 registered political parties, three communist, three pan-Arabist, 10 centrist, and three main Baathist lines. Jordanian parties have

not developed since the 1950s, nor have they brought in anything new in terms of thought, said Dr. Mahafzah.

He stressed that Jordanians had witnessed the experience of political parties assuming power in neighbouring countries, and how they failed to affect change.

"Even Islamic parties that are highly attractive in term of inspiring hope for change and have the largest number of members have internal rifts between the younger generation and the leaders," Dr. Mahafzah added.

Political parties are illegitimate, said lawyer Mjeli, because they were designed to serve states established as a result of the Sykes-Picot agreement.

"They are established to give recognition to the

national state as opposed to Arab nationalism," he said.

Members of the audience said that more analysis was required to explain why, for example, intellectuals do not join political parties and whether political parties do indeed have freedom of movement.

The seminar was the seventh in a series organised by IICRI to assess Jordanian political parties after three years of legislation.

In the previous seminars political party leaders participated in assessing their contributions to Jordanian public life, said Dr. Nizam Asaf, director of the IICRI.

The IICRI plans to publish the proceeding of all seven seminars soon.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

- "Ese Oscuro Objeto del Deseo," at Instituto Cervantes, on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
- "National Gallery of Art, a Treasury of Masterpieces," (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Darat Al Funun, on Thursday at 5:30 p.m.
- "Frankenstein," at the American Center on Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

POETRY/SHORT STORY

- Poetry recital by Egyptian poet Hilmi Salem at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture & Art, Thursday at 6:30 p.m. A recital of short stories by Reem

EXHIBITIONS

- Paintings by Salam Kanaan and ceramics by Najwa Annab and Margaret Tadros at Alia Art

Hijawi and Rakad Hadid also at the Phoenix, on Friday at 6:30 p.m.

BOOK FAIR

- Fifth International Book Fair at the Universal Expo Centre, University Road

BANI HAMIDA FALL EXHIBITION

- The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project presents "Winds of Change" its fall exhibition at the Jerusalem Insurance Company in Shmeisani (tel. 658696)

GALLERY

- Paintings by Iraqi artists Nazem Hamed at Orfali Gallery.
- Paintings by Iraqi artist Saleh Jumai'i at Ab'ad Gallery.
- Paintings by Shakir Hassan Al-Said at the French Cultural Centre. Posters on Louis Pasteur's achievements in science.
- A Retrospective Exhibition of Sculptures and Drawings (1965-1995) by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Funun.
- Selected works by the young and the established at The Gallery, Hotel InterContinental.

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Bani Hamida 10th Anniversary "Winds of Change"

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26 October - 5 November

10:00 am - 9:00 pm

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Jerusalem Insurance Company

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- Excellence
- Green house Jordan
- Modern House
- Noor Engineering
- Span Marketing (Sanderson)

South Korean paratroopers chase fugitive Northern spy

PUYO, South Korea (R) — South Korea sent crack paratroopers into rugged hills Wednesday to chase a suspected North Korean spy after a bloody shootout disrupted the year's biggest U.S.-South Korean military exercise.

Military officials said some 5,000 South Korean soldiers had been temporarily withdrawn from the Foal Eagle exercise to assist in the hunt for the agent who killed a police officer and seriously wounded two others Tuesday.

Foal Eagle is the biggest annual military exercise between the United States and South Korea, involving most of the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in the Korean peninsula, 655,000 South Korean soldiers and some 2.5 million reservists. Lieutenant Colonel Oh Chan-Jong, spokesman for the anti-spionage military operation, said 350 members of the elite Special Forces were dropped from 15 helicopters around the area where the alleged spy

was last spotted fleeing. About 6,000 troops, led by dozens of sniffer dogs, had resumed the manhunt at daybreak after 20,000 servicemen laid a cordon throughout the night.

"We have not yet found any traces of the North Korean spy left," Col. Oh told reporters. "Unless we pin him down within a couple of hours, we will send in a further 1,000 troops."

He said South Korean security forces shot in the leg and captured a companion of the fugitive, identified as Pak Kwang-Nam, 31, Tuesday.

Military officials said Mr. Pak and the captured man infiltrated deep into South Korean territory after sneaking in two months ago. They were hunted down by spycatchers in the town of Puyo in hill country 140 kilometres southwest of Seoul.

Police Corporal Snn Wun-Hak told reporters the fleeing man fired a bullet that hit his helmet at around 8 p.m. (1100 GMT) Tuesday

in a paddy field at the edge of a thickly-forested hill. That was the last sighting of the man.

"On seeing the man I said 'hands up' and he replied 'I'm on the same side'," Cpl. Son said. "I continued shouting 'hands up' and he opened fire with his pistol and ran away into the hills."

The captured man, identified as Kim Do-Sik, 33, was whisked to Seoul for interrogation. News reports said he had been stripped and gagged after trying to commit suicide.

U.S. Colonel John Reitz, a spokesman of the U.S.-South Korean combined forces, said several thousand U.S. troops were due to take part in various rear-area defensive training events in Puyo area as part of the Foal Eagle exercise, aimed at defending the South from guerrilla warfare.

"The challenge is to deal with this real-world incident while continuing all reasonable Foal Eagle training events," he said. "It is not

unreasonable to suspect that other infiltrators may be on the ground."

The alleged infiltration is the second in a week.

Col. Reitz said: "Incidents such as this underscore the importance of trained leaders and forces to maintaining stability on the peninsula. The attempted North Korean infiltration last week and this incident demonstrate the need for continued vigilance in this region."

Last week Seoul said a North Korean infiltrator in a fringed suit was shot dead as he crawled out of a river just South of the demilitarized zone dividing the two Koreas. Another survived and fled back across the border.

Pyeongyang has said last week's incident was a hoax staged by Seoul and Washington.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said last week there would be strong countermeasures in the event of another infiltration. It did not say what they might be.

Kohl defends role in United Nations

BONN (AFP) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl Wednesday defended his controversial decision to skip ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations even though Germany is candidate for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Mr. Kohl came under attack from the opposition Social Democrats for not going to the New York festivities and for justifying his decision by saying he would have had only five minutes to speak.

The ceremonies were attended by nearly 130 heads of state and government.

SPD foreign affairs spokesman Karsten Voigt Tuesday accused the chancellor of "arrogance," and in a parliamentary debate Wednesday his colleague Eberhard Brecht said it was "shameful" that Mr. Kohl, who habitually accorded such importance to symbolic acts, was absent.

But the chancellor reiterated his criticism of the

U.N. ceremony, adding that he had long before the event made it known to the organisers that he believed its form "could not make a convincing impression on citizens of the world."

Mr. Kohl insisted this had not been intended as an affront to the world organisation, and said he was "not bothered" by the criticism.

He said he would "in the very foreseeable future" make a speech to the United Nations on environmental protection — the chancellor has proposed a joint initiative on the subject with the presidents of South Africa and Brazil.

Mr. Kohl said the government would not allow anyone to query German support for the United Nations, and described it as a "scandal" that many other states had not paid their financial dues to the body.

Regarding the proposal that Germany be given a permanent seat on an enlarged U.N. Security Council, the chancellor stated that the idea had not

come from Germany but from the "group of 77" developing countries. "We did not bring this theme up," he said.

He also said SPD leaders shared German aspirations for a permanent seat.

Mr. Kohl said that reform of the council was "urgently necessary," but that Germany was approaching the matter "with delicacy."

He noted that permanent council members France and Britain had not found it easy to accept that the reunited Germany play a larger world role.

In their New York speeches, French President Jacques Chirac called openly for both Germany and Japan to be given a permanent seat and British Prime Minister John Major gave his implicit support to the idea.

Such a move, constituting recognition of the growing political importance of these two economic superpowers, would imply that they should take on greater responsibility for dealing

with the world's problems.

The reform proposals also envisage permanent representation for one or more of the large developing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria or India, but the group of 77 countries had not been able to agree among themselves.

Mr. Kohl said Wednesday. Future German permanent membership of the Security Council would go hand in hand with Bonn's increasing involvement in foreign military operations under the U.N. or NATO banner, a development which corresponds with both Mr. Kohl's wishes and those of U.S. President Bill Clinton administration.

The Clinton administration wants Germany to assume a greater "leadership" role in the world, and Mr. Kohl argues that Germany has a debt to pay to the Western military alliance for having stood by it during the country's cold war division.

U.N. birthday party ends with high hope but no cash

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United Nations ended its 50th birthday party minutes before midnight Wednesday with 185 world leaders promising to make it a more effective organisation — provided they can find the money.

"We ... are determined that the United Nations of the future will work with renewed vigour and effectiveness in promoting peace, development, equality and justice and understanding among the peoples of the world," said a declaration closing the unprecedented gathering of leaders.

It added: "We ... will give to the 21st century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established."

For three days, 185 kings, princes, presidents, prime ministers and their stand-ins offered a mountain of proposals and rhetoric for reforming the world body.

But they did little to solve the organisation's basic problem — no money. The United Nations faces bankruptcy because its largest donor nations have not paid their bills.

entered into force after the end of World War II in 1945.

With a five-minute time-limit on speeches, world leaders trooped to the podium to express their concerns about nuclear tests carried out by France and China or the war in Bosnia.

The United States, which owes the United Nations well over \$1 billion, was another favourite target, particularly among its European allies, for helping turn the United Nations into a beggar. It is currently owed more than \$3 billion.

Longer-range issues raised during the session included how to make an organisation that had 51 founding members more representative of a membership group that has soared to 185.

Everyone agreed the powerful 15-nation Security Council should be enlarged. But there was no consensus on how many seats should be added and who should have them, although Germany and Japan are front-running candidates.

Also undecided is whether any of the new members should have permanent seats, and if so whether they should enjoy the same veto rights as the current big five — the United States, Russia, Britain, China and France — or even whether those

veto rights should be preserved.

While the United States and some other wealthy countries suggested amalgamating a plethora of bodies dealing with various aspects of development, most Third World countries saw this as a threat to their own economic aspirations.

The extraordinary gathering of leaders was captured for the history books in a group photograph taken Sunday morning before the speechmaking began.

Herded into a large conference room and ordered about by a photographer, more than 185 kings, presidents, prime ministers and lesser officials resembled a self-conscious, fidgety group of pupils posing for a school photo.

Despite the presence of more powerful figures, including U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russia's Boris Yeltsin and China's President Jiang Zemin, Cuban leader Fidel Castro drew the spotlight of media attention.

Though pointedly excluded from receptions and dinners by the United States and the city of New York, the ageing revolutionary was warmly applauded and embraced by many as a nostalgic reminder of an era when the Non-Aligned Movement, which he head-

ed at the 1979 assembly, held sway at the United Nations through its leverage between East and West.

Others saw him as a cold war relic whose days are numbered but whose departure from the scene keeps getting postponed.

Also attracting a lot of attention was Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who first addressed the United Nations 21 years ago wearing an empty gun holster.

Mr. Arafat, now a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was ordered out of a concert Monday night for world leaders by New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who was host of the event and insisted that the PLO leader was not invited. The U.S. State Department, the PLO and the White House complained.

At least one participant in the special session said he hoped to be around for the 100th anniversary.

King Mswati III of Swaziland, at 29 the youngest head of state present, told the Assembly: "I may, if God is willing, be one of the very few who will be present when we commemorate our organisation's centenary celebrations in the year 2045."



Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (right) addresses the parliament on the first day of the debate on a no-confidence motion that could topple Prime Minister Lamberto Dini (AFP photo)

Italian Premier has one day to consider quitting before vote

ROME (AP) — Premier Lamberto Dini has one last day in which to think about whether he should quit and avoid the possible embarrassment of losing a parliamentary showdown.

If all deputies follow their party leaders' calls, Mr. Dini stands to lose a confidence vote against him that is set for Thursday in the Chamber of Deputies.

But Mr. Dini doesn't intend to quit and will try "to win the backing (of the deputies) at all costs," the minister of scientific research, Giorgio Salvini, said Tuesday night.

On Tuesday a headline Communist leader put aside his repugnance to join conservative ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi in demanding

Mr. Dini's resignation. The ideological foes agreed that Mr. Dini has worn out his mandate.

A former central banker, Mr. Dini was named in January to lead a "technocrat" government that he himself predicted would only last a few months, the time necessary to make urgently needed deficit-cutting measures like making the pension system less generous.

"Dini must go," Fausto Bertinotti, head of Communist Refoundation told his fellow deputies. "We're sorry" to have to line up with Berlusconi.

"It's time for a return to democracy," Mr. Berlusconi declared during Tuesday's opening of

debate. Mr. Berlusconi and his center-right alliance, including a former neo-fascist party, came to power in March 1994 elections, but his coalition unraveled with a partner's defection after nine months.

Mr. Dini's sticking it out to the vote would probably aggravate the tensions that have sent the lira and stocks plunging.

If Mr. Dini resigns, he might improve his chances of being appointed as a caretaker premier during the mandatory, 60-day campaign period before elections.

It's up to President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to call elections as well as name a new premier.

Burmese junta criticised for refusing to reinstate Suu Kyi as NLD leader

BANGKOK (AFP) — The refusal of Burma's junta to reinstate Aung San Suu Kyi as head of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) is a blow to hopes for political reform, a Burmese dissident group said here Wednesday.

Rangoon's refusal to allow Aung San Suu Kyi's reinstatement as NLD secretary general was against the will of the Burmese people, "Who are embracing her as their sole legitimate leader," the all Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) said.

"This wanton disregard (for) Aung San Suu Kyi will certainly augur ill for ... much-needed national reconciliation and democratic reforms in the country," the

Thailand-based dissident group said in a statement.

A five-member Elections Commission set up by the junta to supervise general elections in 1990 has rejected Aung San Suu Kyi's reappointment to the post she held when she was put under house arrest in 1989, NLD sources said.

The NLD move to reinstate Aung San Suu Kyi came as part of a reshuffle of the party's Central Committee that also brought veteran leaders Tin Oo and Kyi Maung back into the body as vice chairmen.

The three reinstated NLD leaders were expelled from the party in 1991 to comply with regulations against individuals accused of

crimes from holding membership in political parties. All three were under arrest at the time.

Aung San Suu Kyi was released after almost six years on July 10.

The ABSDF said the government's rejection of the move would derail peaceful efforts for political reforms in Burma and was aimed at maintaining control over a national convention to write a new constitution in November.

The NLD won a landslide victory in the 1990 elections but the ruling military junta ignored the result, insisting that a new constitution be drafted before power was handed over to the next elected government.

4 die in 2 Philippine sea collisions

CEBU, Philippines (R) — Four people were killed in two collisions just 70 kilometres from each other in the central Philippines Wednesday, the Coast Guard said.

Two people were crushed to death in a head-on collision between the 4,295-tonne ferry Dona Virginia, owned by the country's biggest inter-island shipper William Lines Inc, and the cargo vessel Robinson off Cebu's west coast.

Two crewmen of the

Robinson, owned by Asian Shipping, were killed and six others were injured in the early morning collision.

The ferry had 774 passengers and 41 crew on board.

The Dona Virginia, its bow dented, sailed under its own power to its destination at nearby Dumaguete City after escorting the Robinson to the nearest land, the Coast Guard said.

Five hours later, the 21-tonne launch Sample Express partially sank after colliding with the 33-tonne

Sto Nino De Jetafa at the mouth of Cebu Harbour, the Coast Guard said.

Two of the 51 passengers of the Sample Express died. One drowned while trying to save his wife, who was rescued later by other passengers. Two people were injured.

More than 4,000 people died in the world's worst peacetime sea disaster in 1987 when the ferry Dona Paz sank after a collision with an oil tanker in the central Philippines.

China forms rapid-reaction force — Jiang

BEIJING (R) — China is forming a rapid-reaction force to police its long borders and trim the costs arising from monolithic frontier security, President Jiang Zemin was quoted Wednesday as saying in New York.

Mr. Jiang, also Communist Party and armed services chief, made the comments in an interview Tuesday with the U.S. Public Broadcasting System, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported from New York.

"China plans to build a rapid reaction force because the country has extraordinarily long boundary lines, which makes it impossible to send troops to guard all of them," Mr. Jiang was quoted as saying.

"Therefore, the establishment of a rapid reaction force may better safeguard the boundary lines and in so doing the country's military

forces can be scaled down and military spending can be reduced," he said.

Mr. Jiang reiterated the Communist government's view that China poses no threat to anyone and its growing military power would "contribute to world peace and stability", Xinhua said.

"China's policy on the national defence strategy is explicitly designed for self-defence and to defend its own territory," Mr. Jiang said.

Mr. Jiang said China's military spending ranks among the world's smallest in aggregate and per-capita terms and dismissed worries about an excessive Chinese military buildup as "groundless".

South East Asian countries have voiced growing unease about China's army modernisation and its apparent willingness to use force to back up its claims

to disputed territories.

Mr. Jiang called China's claim to the contested Spratly Islands in the South China Sea as "indisputable" but said it was willing to shelve the disputes in favour of common development.

He rejected a schism of thought emerging in the United States that China was potentially a reckless giant meriting a "policy of containment" like that marshalled by Washington against the Soviet Union before its collapse.

"Jiang said that it would be at least unwise for the United States to 'contain' China because of China's growing strength," Xinhua said.

Mr. Jiang was in New York to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Is there a doctor on board?

OSLO, Norway (AP) — When the crew of a New York bound airliner called for a doctor, Norway's prime minister reported for duty. Gro Harlem Brundtland, a physician turned politician, was flying to New York to join other government leaders in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Off the coast of Iceland, a passenger reportedly suffered heart problems. "The aircraft crew called for a doctor. I spoke up," Ms. Brundtland told the Oslo newspaper Dagbladet Monday. Three doctors were on board, including the 42-year-old male patient, and they debated the best treatment. "Our joint answer to the crew was that it would be best and safest to land on Iceland," the prime minister told the newspaper. The plane landed in Iceland, with Ms. Brundtland holding the man in her arms to comfort him. An ambulance at the airport took the man to the hospital. He was released and continued his trip Sunday.

McCartney makes Grateful Dead tribute film

LONDON (R) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney has made a film tribute to the Grateful Dead, whose lead singer Jerry Garcia died this year. The nine-minute film is to have its premiere at next month's London Film Festival, organisers said Wednesday. The film is based on four rolls of film taken by McCartney's photographer wife Linda in 1967-1968 at a Grateful Dead concert in New York and then at home in San Francisco. Garcia, a leading member of the hippie movement, was found dead in his room at a Californian drug rehabilitation centre in August. He is believed to have suffered a heart attack. "Jerry's death is a tragedy," McCartney said in a statement giving details of his "photo-film" in which he took 140 stills and manipulated them on a computer.

Galileo responds to signals from Earth

PASADENA, California (R) — The spacecraft Galileo is responding to signals from Earth after a lapse of several weeks. NASA's jet propulsion laboratory said. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration had feared that Galileo, on a mission to Jupiter, may have lost the capability to transmit pictures back to Earth. But a brief statement from the jet propulsion laboratory said all was well.

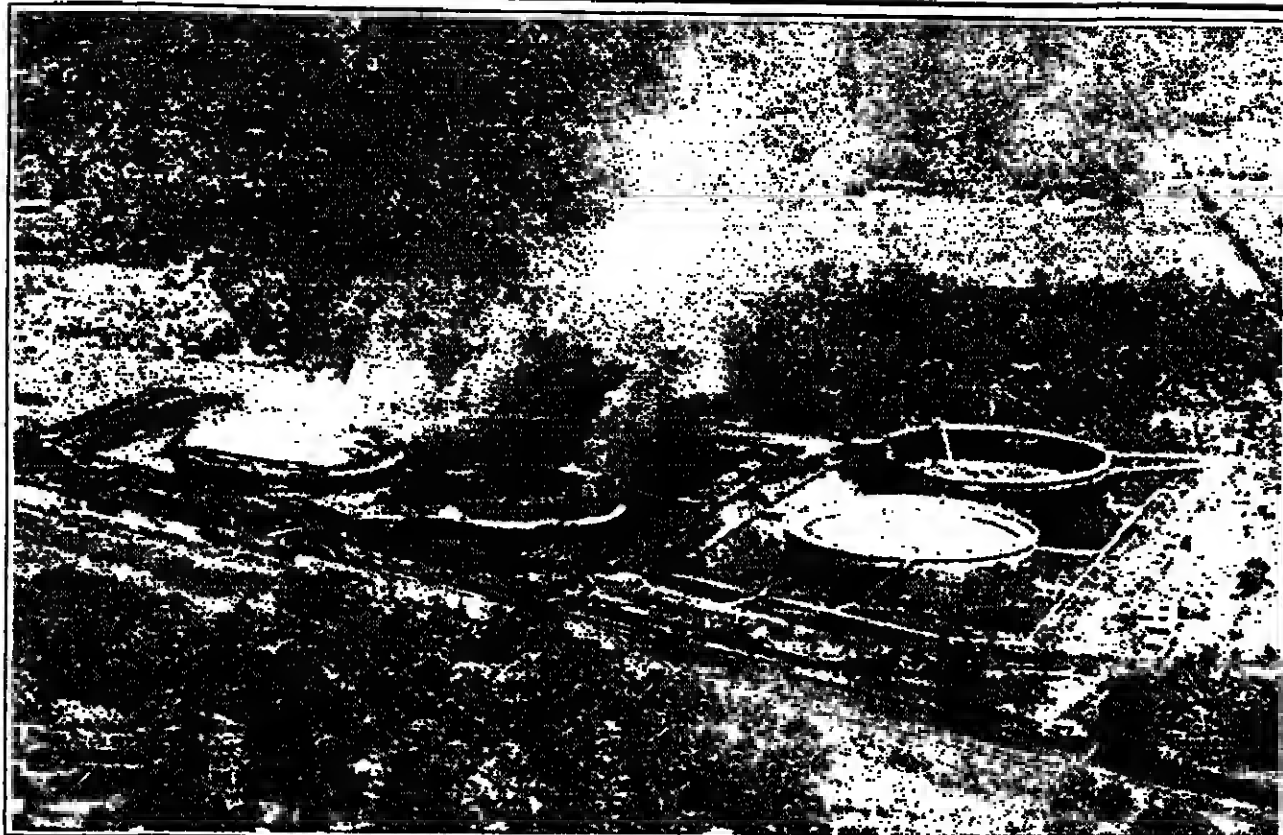
Offer of discounts for condom-users fails

MANILA (AFP) — A campaign among prostitutes in the central Philippines to offer 50 per cent discounts to patrons who use condoms was called off after it failed to encourage prophylactic use, a newspaper reported here Monday. The Philippine Inquirer quoted Ilya Abellanosa, chief of the Sexually-Transmitted Disease Detection Unit in Cebu City, as saying the campaign merely allowed prostitutes to charge higher prices. The campaign began last year with prostitutes giving discounts to patrons who agreed to use condoms. This was part of a scheme to prevent the spread of the fatal AIDS disease and other sexually-transmitted illnesses. However, the customers instead offered to pay extra to have sex without condoms, prompting some prostitutes to demand higher prices for unprotected sex. Abellanosa said they would instead focus more attention to health education, and noted that many prostitutes still saw no need to use condoms.

OSLO, Norway (AP) — When the crew of a New York-bound airliner called for a doctor, Norway's prime minister reported for duty.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, a physician turned politician, was flying to New York to join other government leaders in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations on the coast of Iceland, a passenger reportedly suffered heart problems. "The aircraft crew called for a doctor. I spoke up," Ms. Brundtland told the Oslo newspaper Dagbladet Monday. Three doctors were on board, including the 42-year-old male patient, and she delivered the best treatment. "The joint answer to the crew was that it would be best and safest to land in Iceland," the prime minister told the newspaper. The plane landed in Iceland with Ms. Brundtland holding the man in her arms in comfort. An ambulance at the airport took the man to the hospital. He was released and continued his trip Sunday.

World News



Sri Lanka's largest crude oil tanks smoulder four days after Tamil rebels launched a rocket attack against the storage facility and triggered a major fire in the capital Colombo (AFP photo)

Japan subway trial delayed as guru fires lawyer

TOKYO (R) — The trial of the cult leader accused of masterminding the Tokyo subway gas attack was indefinitely postponed Wednesday — the eve of its start — when the guru fired his sole lawyer.

A spokesman for the Tokyo District Court said Shoko Asahara, guru of the Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth) sect, sacked his lawyer forcing the cancellation of Thursday's opening session. Under Japanese law, murder trials cannot be held without a defence lawyer.

He said no new date had been set for the trial to start.

It would have been Asahara's first public appearance since his May 16 arrest on charges of masterminding the March 20 subway nerve gas attack, which killed 11 people and made nearly 4,000 passen-

gers ill.

Aum spokesmen were not available for comment and it was not clear why Asahara suddenly fired the lawyer, Shoji Yokoyama, after months of discussing defence tactics with him.

Anti-cult lawyers said Asahara's action was a delaying tactic to prolong his life.

"It's a nasty way of postponing the trial...The merit for Asahara could be that his life will be prolonged as it is widely expected that he will be sentenced to hang," said lawyer Yoshio Takei, of the Aum Victims Association said.

Mr. Yokoyama had said last week that Asahara planned to plead not guilty to charges of murder and attempted murder stemming from the subway attack.

However, Asahara's plea of not guilty was looking

increasingly shaky because of the volume of evidence revealed in the trial of a co-defendant Tuesday, and testimony against the guru by many followers.

On Tuesday, at the trial of Tomomasa Nakagawa, the guru's personal physician, prosecutors said Asahara ordered the production of sarin — the deadly nerve gas used in the attack on five rush-hour subway trains. They said Asahara ordered the attack as a pre-emptive strike to head off expected police raids on his cult.

Mr. Yokoyama, 67, has frequently represented criminals linked to "yakuza" organised crime groups in Japan. A former prosecutor, he has been a trial lawyer since 1965 in Osaka, his hometown. He has handled several gangland shootout cases involv-

ing the Yamaguchi-Gumi, Japan's largest crime syndicate.

Legal experts are puzzled by Mr. Yokoyama's decision not to hire other lawyers to help him in his lone defence of Asahara.

In public statements, Mr. Yokoyama has said he has never been a supporter of the cult and opposes its activities.

Asked by reporters why he would defend the guru, he had replied: "I want to get to know this Asahara person. Clarifying white or black (acquittal or conviction) is not the only job of a lawyer. I wanted to know the truth of this case and the sect, through the trial."

"I have told defendant Asahara that he should accept a conviction if it is a fair trial. He has accepted this."

Hopes and fears divide Quebec in referendum

SALABERRY-DE-VALLEYFIELD, Quebec (R) — Gilles Cardinal shocked his family recently by announcing that he will vote against Quebec independence in Sunday's referendum.

Once a passionate separatist who voted for independence in the 1980 Quebec referendum, the 52-year-old Cardinal, who owns a small retail store in Salaberry-De-Valleyfield, 61 kilometres southwest of Montreal, says this time the economic stakes are too high.

"Now I'm scared because they (Quebec separatist leaders) can't give real answers. They're skipping things and hiding things," said Mr. Cardinal, the father of two grown sons.

Across Quebec, some 492 kilometres to the northeast along the St. Lawrence River, 30-year-old teacher Lorraine Dumont has reached the opposite conclusion. She says she will vote in favour of separation because she believes Quebec's national aspirations can no longer be satisfied in Canada.

Ms. Dumont listened to a speech by separatist leader Lucien Bouchard at the junior college where she teaches French in the small town of Riviere-Du-Loup and left inspired by his message that Quebec must take charge of its own destiny.

"I know that we are facing the unknown in some respects, but Bouchard is right when he says it is time to take things in hand," she said.

Mr. Cardinal and Ms. Dumont are just two of the 4.9 million Quebec voters who will be asked on Oct. 30 whether they want the province to "become sovereign" from Canada. Their decisions show how the referendum on independence has divided the people of Quebec, torn between a wish to take charge of their own affairs and a fear that the cost of doing so is too high.

Public opinion polls suggest, just days before the vote, that the outcome is too close to call.

Ms. Dumont was only 14 years old in 1980 when

Quebec voted by 60 to 40 per cent against separation from Canada. "I cried because I realised that, more than ever, all the demands of the Quebec people would be smothered in the federal system," she said.

What upsets Ms. Dumont most in the current referendum campaign is what she sees as fear-mongering by opponents who charge that separation would threaten up to a million jobs, damage Quebec's economy and isolate the French-speaking province just as technology and trade are effectively erasing national borders elsewhere in the world.

"I find it scornful of them to say that we can't do it, that we aren't able to stand on our own as a people," Ms. Dumont says of the opponents of Quebec independence.

In speeches across Quebec, separatist leader Bouchard, a charismatic orator, plays down the economic costs and makes emotional appeals to pride in the French language and culture.

A poll published Tuesday in the Journal De Montreal newspaper suggests that his strategy is working with young voters such as Ms. Dumont, who are more likely to take the risk of voting for independence.

But Mr. Cardinal says anyone who is voting for separation is not thinking about the economy. With a small business to run, he is not willing to risk the possibility of five to 15 years of serious economic problems after a divorce from Canada.

Canadian financial markets are nervous going into the referendum, with the dollar and stock market falling and interest rates rising.

"I just want to know if we have enough money to play this game. If we separate tomorrow, do we owe \$10 million, or \$20 million?" Mr. Cardinal asked.

"How much will our dollar be worth on the market? Fifty cents? Eighty cents? I think they're hiding the cost of separation. What about trade with other countries? I don't think it will be easy to

do," he added.

Ms. Dumont says she is ready to cope with the economic fallout after separation. "If we need to cut our government expenditures after independence, we simply have to do it in an intelligent fashion," she said.

Meanwhile his nation on the brink of splitting, Prime Minister Jean Chretien pleaded with his fellow Quebecers to thwart the separatists who now predict victory in the independence referendum.

Trying to recoup from a disastrous week in which the separatists surged into the lead, Mr. Chretien drew the biggest federalist crowd of the campaign — at least 3,000 people — to a sports arena in suburban Montreal.

"The future of this country will be played out within one week," Mr. Chretien said, referring to Monday's referendum. "Canada is at stake... It is a country worth fighting for."

Tuesday night's speech, to an impassioned crowd chanting "non, non" to separatism as they waved Canadian and Quebec flags, was one of the most important of Mr. Chretien's career.

Making clear his sense of urgency, he also booked television time Wednesday evening for an address to the nation. It was the first time he had ever made use of a federal act allowing such an address if it is deemed crucially important to Canadians.

Infighting has wracked the federalist side for several days as its leaders argue over whether to make a last-minute offer to Quebec of constitutional reform.

"The wheels have come off the (federalist) campaign," said Pierre Paradis, the No. 2 federalist leader in the mostly French-speaking province. He said the separatists would win Monday unless Mr. Chretien and premiers of the nine English-speaking provinces made a dramatic offer to Quebec of some special constitutional status.

In Montreal, hundreds of people have swamped passport offices to obtain Canadian passports before

the referendum. Federalists warn that Quebecers could lose their passports if Quebec — home to a quarter of Canada's population — secedes.

Warren Allmand, a Montreal resident who serves in parliament for the federalist Liberal Party, said his office was receiving many phone calls from worried constituents.

"People are upset. They're panicking," Mr. Allmand said. "They wish we could do something — something magical."

Mr. Bouchard, said the federalists had squandered an opportunity by failing to make a concrete offer of constitutional reform to Quebec. He cited the attitude of Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells as proof Quebecers should expect no special recognition from the rest of Canada.

Mr. Wells said Monday that Quebec shouldn't be granted any privileged status.

"I'm not prepared ever to acknowledge that my quality of citizenship in this country is any less than the quality of a resident of another province by reason of language, culture, size of the province, economic power, colour of my hair, ethnic origin or anything else," Mr. Wells told the Newfoundland legislature.

In the northern half of Quebec, Cree Indians held their own referendum Tuesday to demonstrate their opposition to separation. Grand Chief Matthew Coon came said the expected rejection of separation was intended to pressure the federal government to intervene on behalf of the Crees if Quebec does opt for independence.

The leader of a national coalition on Indian groups, Ovide Mercredi, warned Quebec not to place its sovereignty on a higher plane than Indian sovereignty.

"If we want to take our land and remain in Canada, we'll take it and remain in Canada. If we want to take it and join forces with Quebec, we'll take it and join forces with Quebec," Mr. Mercredi said.

Sri Lankan Tamil rebels 'losing grip' on stronghold

-COLOMBO (R) — The Sri Lankan army's offensive against the Tamil rebel stronghold is breaking the guerrillas' grip on the far north, depriving them of fresh recruits and access to medical care, defence officials said Wednesday.

About 425 Tamil Tiger rebels have been killed and more than 500 wounded in eight days of fierce fighting which has brought a massive army force near the guerrillas' prized Jaffna City.

"The Tigers can't afford to sustain such losses in so short a period," a senior army officer told Reuters.

The guerrillas were desperately calling for reinforcements from other theatres of the war and urging Jaffna youths to join their ranks to fight the approaching army, he said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) run a virtual mini-state with their own courts, police and civil administration in Jaffna, which is also a major rebel

recruiting ground.

On Sunday, the rebels, notorious for sending teenage boys and girls to battle, called for parents to send their children to sign up to fight the armed forces saying "your country needs you".

The "country" they were referring to was "Tamil Eelam", the would-be homeland in the north and east of tropical Sri Lanka for which the rebels began fighting in 1983. More than 50,000 people have died in the war since then.

"To save the land, we need reinforcements," the Tigers said over their clandestine radio. "If we lose Eelam, we can't do anything."

The rebels were anxious to retain their grip on the city because their wounded are treated at Jaffna hospital, one of the highest in the country, military sources said.

But the rebels had also prepared a fall-back command post and hospital near

Kilinochchi, on the northern mainland, if Jaffna fell, they said.

Diplomats have said three army divisions with a combined strength of about 21,000 troops, backed by armour, artillery and air support, are poised for the assault on Jaffna.

The army has lost 123 soldiers and more than 300 have been wounded in the offensive, codenamed Operation Riviresa (Sunshine).

The diplomats said they believed the struggle for densely populated Jaffna may result in a heavy loss of life on both sides, as well as among the civilian population.

But its value as a psychological boost for government troops and a blow to rebel morale far outweighs the risks of provoking international reaction against Colombo, the diplomats say.

Some 410,000 people, or 53 per cent of the families in Jaffna, have been displaced by the fighting, K.

Ponnambalam, the top government official in Jaffna, told Reuters.

He said there was an acute food shortage in the peninsula despite pleas to the government for more stocks. The government has denied reports of a food shortage.

With the rebels were pressed in the north, they have launched attacks on civilians in the east and in Colombo in the south.

The rebels have massacred 90 mostly Sinhalese people, including infants, in raids on four eastern villages since Saturday. Last Friday, they blew up the country's two main oil depots in Colombo.

Diplomats said the attacks may distract the military as troops move closer to Jaffna City and may also be aimed at provoking a Sinhalese backlash against Tamils in the south.

Russia admits Ingush helicopter raid

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian Defence Ministry acknowledged Wednesday sending helicopter-borne troops to the main airport in the Caucasus Republic of Ingushetia where local authorities accused them of indiscriminately opening fire, killing one civilian and wounding two.

A ministry spokesman said the troops were dispatched Tuesday to the airport in Sleptovskaya to "check out" reports that separatists from neighbouring Chechnya had occupied the facility.

Spokesman Gouresh Agassiyev said the Russian military authorities as well as magistrates in Ingushetia were investigating the incident.

According to Mr. Agassiyev, Ingush President Ruslan Ayushev had a meeting in Moscow Tuesday with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin who had promised to "speed up the enquiries" into the incident.

The military prosecutor's department in Moscow was unable to confirm that any investigation was taking place.

On Tuesday Mr. Agapov said Sleptovskaya Airport had been blockaded by seven helicopters which had provided cover for an assault force of 20 men.

"The Russian servicemen fired their automatic weapons right under the feet of the people at the airport, as a result of which two people were wounded and one killed," Interfax News Agency



Chechen women cry during a funeral ceremony in front of a house destroyed by Russian attacks (AFP photo)

Late Tuesday Ingushetian Vice-President Boris Agapov accused the Russians of carrying out a "hasty and badly planned" raid on the airport, located near the Ingush-Chechen border.

The Defence Ministry here said that "after making checks" the helicopters had returned to their base. It made no mention of any fighting.

An Ingush presidential spokesman said Wednesday that Russian paratroopers flown in aboard in the helicopters had stolen seven million rubles (\$1,555) and \$350 in cash from airport tills and had rifled goods and cash for a total of \$1,100 from a cafe on the

airport premises.

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"The Russian servicemen fired their automatic weapons right under the feet of the people at the airport, as a result of which two people were wounded and one killed," Interfax News Agency

leader Dzhokhar Dudayev's militants had seized the airport.

He added that it was not clear who was behind the information and what purpose it served.

"Three times we tried to convince everyone that no one was capturing us, but we were advised to take precautionary measures and step up airport protection," Mr. Agapov said.

China quake death toll rises to 36; 204 hurt

BEIJING (R) — Rescue workers and soldiers have found 36 dead and 204 people injured and were picking through rubble for survivors after a strong earthquake that rocked China's rural Yunnan province, officials said Wednesday.

The death toll could rise, an official of the Yunnan Provincial Foreign Affairs Office said by telephone.

Rescue teams were searching the wreckage of buildings in the worst hit villages in Wuding and Luqun counties in search of more survivors, the official said.

In what appeared to be a sign of the seriousness of the tremor, President Jiang Zemin called from New York to convey his sympathy for earthquake victims.

Premier Li Peng called the provincial governor to inquire about damages and

relief operation, Xinhua News Agency said.

Most of the injured, including 117 people seriously hurt, were receiving medical treatment from the rescue workers and from teams of People's Liberation Army soldiers sent to help with the disaster, he said.

"All the injured have received proper medical treatment," he said.

The tremor, measuring 6.5 on the Richter Scale, struck early Tuesday during a torrential rainstorm that added to the misery of survivors and made rescue and relief work especially difficult in the rugged mountain province bordering Burma.

Officials said most of the victims were killed when their homes collapsed as they slept.

"Many people suffered head injuries and others were just crushed to death

when their homes fell down," the official said.

One local official estimated the initial wave of tremors lasted a terrifying 15 minutes.

However, the epicentre was in a mountainous area, not in towns, meaning that damage was not as extensive as it might have been, officials said, adding that most buildings that collapsed were single-storey houses.

Television footage showed the wreckage of a mud-brick school that collapsed in the earthquake. It showed pictures of young injured children and the body of one dead child in hospital.

Officials said at least 520 houses had collapsed, leaving an unknown number of people homeless.

Northern areas near Wuding and Yuanmou counties suffered heavily

from the earthquake, which hit eight other cities and prefectures in Yunnan, including the provincial capital of Kunming, as well as Panzhihua, the agency said.

A small reservoir damaged in the tremor was leaking, causing concern for residents living downstream.

The earthquake severed communications to Wuding, home to about 240,000 people, half of them ethnic minorities and half China's predominant ethnic Han, Xinhua said.

Seismologists counted more than 200 aftershocks, including seven with Richter readings above four.

In July, a 7.3-magnitude tremor jolted Yunnan's Menglian region, killing 11 people and injuring 136.

Rookie in orbit says space is great, food so-so

SPACE CENTRE, Houston (AP) — One of five rookies in space gave rave reviews to life aboard the U.S. shuttle Columbia, even if the food in orbit warrants less than five stars.

Astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria, the first Spanis-born person in orbit, said weightlessness suits him.

"It's difficult to describe it in words but it has a very balmy, very calm sensafool

on one's nerves, especially due to the lack of gravity," Mr. Lopez-Alegria told Spanish radio chain SER Monday.

As for the food, he said it's nothing to write home about.

"The first two days I did not have much of an appetite, but the food here is not bad," he said. "I would not order it in a restaurant, but I guess for 16 days it's

not too bad."

Mr. Lopez-Alegria, 37, was born in Madrid to a Spanish father and American mother but grew up in California. It is his first trip in space for him and four of the seven crew members.

The crew is working in two shifts around the clock on a series of science experiments. They're also trying out some new electronic gadgets intended to make

shuttle life more efficient and homey.

Earlier Monday, Commander Kenneth Bowersox and pilot Kent Rominger chatted for 15 minutes with flight controllers via a new ground-to-space TV system.

The astronauts were able to see real-time video images beamed up from the ground thanks to this system, flying for the first time on a shuttle.

McCartney makes Grateful Dead tribute film

LONDON (R) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney is making a film tribute to the Grateful Dead, whose lead singer Jerry Garcia died this year. The nine-minute film is to have its premiere at next month's London Film Festival, organisers said Wednesday. The film is based on four rolls of film taken by McCartney's photographer wife Linda in 1970-1988 at a Grateful Dead concert in New York and then at home in San Francisco. Garcia, a lead singer of the band, died of a heart attack in 1995. McCartney's film is a tribute to Garcia and the band. It is expected to be shown at the London Film Festival in November.

Galileo responds to signals from Earth

PADOVA, Calif. (R) — The spacecraft Galileo is responding to signals from Earth after a series of successful tests. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said. The X-band Antennas and Space Administration on a mission to Jupiter. The spacecraft is expected to arrive at Jupiter in December 1995. It will then spend several years studying the planet and its moons. Galileo is the first of a new class of spacecraft called "deep space" probes. They are designed to travel much farther from Earth than previous probes. Galileo is being launched on the Space Shuttle Atlantis in October 1995.

Offer of discounts for condom-users fails

MANILA, Philippines (R) — A campaign to encourage condom use by offering discounts to patients who used condoms failed. The Philippine Inquirer reported. The campaign was launched by the National Commission on the Rights and Welfare of the Adolescent (NCRWA) and the Department of Health. It offered discounts on medical services to patients who used condoms. The campaign was aimed at reducing the number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. However, the campaign failed to attract many participants. The NCRWA said it was disappointed by the results. It said it would continue to promote condom use through other means. The Department of Health also said it would continue to promote condom use through other means. The campaign was part of a larger effort to reduce the number of STIs and HIV/AIDS in the Philippines. It was one of many initiatives launched by the government to combat these diseases. The Philippines has one of the highest rates of STIs and HIV/AIDS in the world. The government has been working to reduce these rates for many years. The campaign was one of the most recent efforts in this fight.

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Pledge to move on

THE BEGINNINGS were humble, difficult and challenging. But they were also ambitious.

As it marks its 20th anniversary, the Jordan Times acknowledges that not all the ambitions have been realised. Nevertheless we feel a sense of achievement in having overcome many of the difficulties and of having moved a long way from a four-page publication produced to the crackles of old typewriters in 1975 to a 12-page newspaper that is being fully computerised today.

In 1975, the Jordan Times was seen as an English translation of articles selectively taken from its sister publication, Al Ra'i. Twenty years and much hard work later, the Jordan Times is recognised as a leading Jordanian daily with its independent, professional and daring editorial policy.

When the Jordan Times started, it was meant to cater for the needs of foreigners in the country.

No more.

We are ourselves, and so do the majority of our readers, as a Jordanian newspaper whose duty is to keep the reader abreast of all that happens around them. When we produce the newspaper, we have the Jordanian as well as the international guest in mind. What guides us is our commitment to the truth, professionalism, journalistic ethics and the service of all those who read us.

The Jordan Times, like other newspapers and institutions in the country, has lived through difficult and challenging times. It has survived the martial laws of years past. And it is trying to meet the demands of increasingly more demanding readers in a tangible more tolerant and open environment.

Our eyes are focused on the future. It appears to promise greater democracy, pluralism and prosperity. This is an environment in which any and all kinds of media can thrive. But it is also one in which people expect more, thus increasing the pressure for a better quality product from all concerned.

The Jordan Times knows that technology is a key to survival in the new age of telecommunications. Its efforts to modernise its infrastructure are thus proceeding. Yet the paper is also aware that the human element is what counts at the end of the day. And we are working to provide our staff with the best training that they can get.

Just as in 1975, difficulties and challenges persist. But so does the determination to move forward. We can make only one promise to our readers on this occasion: We will give them our best.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

CRITICISING THE United States for allegedly arresting Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk without legal grounds, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily, said that the United States is proving once again that it is dedicating its policies to serving Israeli objectives. Mr. Abu Marzouk is an American and not an Israeli citizen and cannot be extradited to the Jewish state for trial, even if he had committed resistance activity to rid his country of occupation, said the writer. His detention in the United States is by no means justified and his extradition, if it takes place, will make Washington an accomplice to Israel's crimes, said Mr. Rimawi. The American authorities have no right to detain a citizen for his political beliefs, said the writer. He said that Washington, which claims to be sponsoring the peace process, can release Mr. Abu Marzouk from jail to win credibility and help the Hamas-Palestine National Authority current reconciliation talks to achieve success, and so help the peace process to continue. By setting Mr. Abu Marzouk free, Washington can indeed prove that it supports a just and durable peace in the Middle East, added the writer.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Wednesday urged world nations to reform the United Nations Organisation and free its various agencies from hegemony and domination by the United States and its Western allies. Sultan Al Hattab said that on its 50th anniversary, the world organisation seems to be weaker than ever, its coffers nearly empty, and most importantly, its various agencies are in need of overhauling so that it can pursue the objective for which it has been created 50 years ago. When it came into being after World War II, the United Nations represented the hope of millions of people, and indeed some of its agencies like UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNESCO have achieved great strides in promoting health, education and care for children around the world, said Hattab. But, he said, other agencies, like UNRWA, which cares for the Palestinian refugees, has faltered because of Western influence, and many of the world's problems remain outstanding today due to tampering in U.N. affairs by these same powers. The writer said there is a dire need for reform so that the world organisation can truly serve the interests of all nations.

The View from Academia

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Jordan: An attractive labour market

PRIOR TO, throughout and in the aftermath of the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit (MENA), which will be held in Amman next week, Jordan will have to do its best to market or "sell" itself to potential investors, both foreign and domestic. Such task is going to be a real challenge, for Jordan has a relatively new experience with it. Up until recently, and due to circumstances emanating (essentially) from the long, slow and gloomy decades of the Arab-Israeli conflict, most of Jordan's efforts have been geared toward making ends meet. The main target was foreign aid and loans. Now, the rules of the game are different, and our main goal seems to be to attract investment.

I am sure that Jordan has under its hat a few pleasant surprises for the anxious participants, surprises such as those we have already been hearing about: Not only substantive amendments and changes in the laws and regulations governing investment, custom fees, import and export, etc. but also specific ideas, proposals and projects. One feels confident that the concerned parties in the country have done their homework well. MENA is too precious an occasion to be taken casually or lightly.

To the end of marketing Jordan, one ought to emphasise the country as an attractive source of labour. For years Jordan has prided itself in the quality of its people, the motto being "our people are our real capital." And indeed there is a great deal of truth in this, the evidence being the excellent reputation Jordanians working in neighbouring Arab countries have earned over the last three decades in particular.

In my opinion, Jordanian workers (be it at the manual, technical, clerical, executive or managerial levels) are attractive a) because they have an extremely healthy attitude toward work, b) because they are qualified and c) because they are fairly inexpensive.

Admittedly, the picture may not have always been so bright. Not long ago, Jordanians generally (within the country, that is, not outside it) shied away from working for the private sector. Up until the late seventies, most university graduates (for example) sought jobs in the Ministry of Education and other ministries, in

the Armed Forces and in the semi-governmental establishments. Up until the early eighties, it was not fashionable to major in Business Administration. Of course, students who had parents working for the private sector or running their own business sought actively to enter the colleges of commerce, finance and economics at our universities, but up until the said period most students admitted in those colleges were not really convinced of the "value" of their studies and they accepted the offer to enter such colleges either because they had no other choices or because they had "inferior" options. Not long ago also, Jordanians shied away from manual labour and jobs in the service sectors. A Tawjihi, community-college or university graduate thought it demeaning and degrading to work, say, on construction sites, in restaurants, in hotels, in shops, in factories, in farms, etc. Such graduates spent years (at times two or three) waiting for a certain ministry or establishment to hire them. They are, lived and took money from home; it never crossed their minds for a second and work (even on a temporary basis) at a restaurant, a shop or a hotel to earn money to support themselves.

Today, the situation is completely different. The private sector is looked at very positively; it is viewed as offering real opportunities and fulfilling careers. Many of our most competent and able graduates prefer the private to the public sector, not only because there is more money in it but because the atmosphere is healthier and more congenial. The colleges of commerce, finance and economics at our universities are among the most desired and the most competitive. For most of our students, Business Administration or Finance comes in their list of priorities immediately after Medicine and Engineering (the two most sought specialties). Naturally, such colleges have raised their level of expectation with regard to student performance, have upgraded their standards and have imposed new criteria. The outcome is, undoubtedly, competent graduates.

With regard to manual labour, it is no longer viewed as demeaning or degrading. Far from it; many people find it a source of good income

and a source of pride. I know many English majors (for example) who work as construction workers, carpenters, electricians; and I know many university and community-college graduates who work at hotels, restaurants, supermarkets and shops.

A few years ago you could not convince even a starving English major to work as a tour guide, today many of our best students are sitting for exams, taking courses and offering their services wholeheartedly to tourist authorities and agencies. The University of Jordan offers an exam and a course for potential tourist guides every couple of months. The number of those who show up for the exam and sign up for the course is unbelievable. I have talked to a number of them; they all see a real opportunity there; some have quit their jobs in the public sector to pursue a career in tourism.

While our public sector is losing many of our most gifted and able individuals, the private sector is gaining them.

The point to emphasise here, however, is that our young people of today are extremely open-minded about their career options, extremely qualified and extremely dynamic. All they need is an opportunity and the right environment in which to flourish and prosper.

Add to this the fact that, compared to many other countries (near and far), their financial expectations are fairly reasonable. I know many former students who work at restaurants and hotels for 80, 90, 100, 120, 140 and 180 Jordan dinars a month. My hope is that they will make more than this when the dreams we attach to MENA (or some of them) materialise. Still what they hope to earn is significantly lower than what is presently offered in the said countries. Investors won't have to pay them substantial housing allowances, travel expenses and other costly benefits (as many business owners in many of our neighbouring countries presently do).

Jordan, I believe, is among the very few countries in the region which is ready to make available many fairly talented, educated, able and inexpensive workers. This is an advantage which ought not to be overlooked.

Membership in professional associations should not be obligatory

By Dr. Maan Abu Nowar

THOSE WHO read the statement by Ishaq Al Farhan, the secretary general of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), in Al Ra'i newspaper earlier this month, could notice that he opened the door for a wise and objective debate on the issue of the trade unions.

He said: "The first concern of the trade unions must be professional, we do not want them to become political parties." He also said: "We feel that the trade unions will be unjustly treated if their law is amended so that their membership become voluntary because they represent hundreds of thousands of professionals."

Those who are knowledgeable, or wise politicians, whether party members or independents, academics or professionals, could not disagree with him regarding his first statement. But they find it extremely difficult to agree with him on his second statement.

Politicising the trade unions

Article 23 (2) paragraph (F) of the Constitution stipulates that "the state shall protect labour and enact a legislation therefore based on the following principles... Free trade unions may be formed within the limits of the law." The legislator did not intend the trade unions to be political organisations. The Constitution stipulates in Article 16 (2) that: "Jordanians are entitled to establish societies and political parties provided that the objects of such societies and parties are lawful, their methods peaceful and their bylaws not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution."

Article 16 (3) states: "The establishment of societies and political parties and the control of their resources shall be regulated by law."

This clear distinction between societies and political parties on the one hand, and trade unions on the other, leaves no room for

doubt that the legislator intended, by content and form, to permit political activities by societies and political parties and to forbid trade unions from acting politically.

Furthermore, there is no discrimination whatsoever between Jordanians who, under Article 16, have the full right of holding "meetings within the limits of the law." Therefore, any member of a trade union is free to join any political party in accordance with the Constitution. There, in his political party or his society, he can freely practice his political right. However, trade unions have no right whatsoever to politicise their members, any of its institutions or their union activities in accordance with their law. It is not logical, indeed it is destructive, for any trade union to include within its organisation political formations belonging to the various political parties.

This kind of behaviour distracts the unions from their higher and more important aim of looking after the interests of their members, their profession, and the service of the nation without discrimination on the basis of party politics. Both the United Kingdom and France have suffered from the politics of the trade unions since 1928, and until the laws governing the behaviour of the trade unions were amended. The law in the majority of democratic countries made membership in trade unions or political parties a matter of choice. The laws provide that gifts or contributions to political parties are also voluntary not compulsory. All these and other recent reforms of trade union laws in Europe prevented trade unions from forcing governments or political parties to submit to their political will.

The British Labour Party, which depends largely on the voluntary financial contributions from the trade unions, has refused to

accept demands by the unions to include the declaration of a minimum wage in Labour Party policy.

Tony Blair, the leader of the Labour Party, said at the Transport and General Workers Union conference that trade unions would not be able to force their policies on a Labour government. He said that: "There would be no going back to the days when ministers bowed to the wishes of union barons." He insisted on his reforms and added: "We continue with it or we die... people ask me when it will stop, when will I draw a line under change. The answer is never."

He emphasised: "I want to be quite blunt with you about the modern relationship between today's Labour Party and the trade unions. There was a time when a large trade union would

"Work, and freedom of work, in any profession or place is the right of every citizen. It is an inalienable human right, and no union has the right of forcing any citizen to be its member."

pass a policy, and then it was assumed Labour would follow suit. Demands were made — Labour responded and negotiated. Those days are over. Gone. They are not coming back."

Tooy Blair, whose message was heard in an awkward silence, earned a standing ovation at the end of his speech; for his courage and determination.

This is the situation in the whole of Europe; it is the application of the principle of freedom from the political excesses of the barons of the trade unions; it is the freedom from the use of the trade unions for political ends. It is not the return to professionalism by the unions: it is freeing the unions from politics, and cleansing them from political despotism. In that sense, some serious thought must be directed towards the harmony and similarities between the leader of the

British Labour Party and the secretary-general of the IAF in their progressive thought.

The numbers of the members of professional associations in Jordan are as follows:

Journalists: 260
Doctors: 11,200
Dentists: 2,800
Nurses: 4,100
Veterinarians: 450
Chemists: 3,600
Geologists: 950
Lawyers: 2,900
Engineers: 32,900
Contractors: 1,300
Agricultural Engineers: 5,500

The number of the members of professional associations is higher than the number of the members of all the political parties. The financial resources available to the trade unions, including their immovable properties, are tens of times more than the very limited resources of the political parties. The resources of two unions only, are as follows:

Jordan Medical Association — JD 17 million
Jordan Engineers Association — JD 30 million

These resources alone equal 47 times the resources available to the political parties, which are voluntary bodies with no means of compulsory collection of money by law, like the trade unions. If political competition could occur between the unions and the parties, the unions could assure themselves of 47 more chances of winning beforehand.

Compulsory membership of the unions

In Article 6 (1), the Jordanian Constitution stipulates: "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards their rights and duties on

grounds of race, language or religion."

It says in Article 7 that: "Personal freedom shall be guaranteed." Article 23 (1) stipulates: "Work is the right of every citizen, and the state shall provide opportunities for work to all citizens by directing the national economy and raising standards."

Paragraph (2) of the same article says: "Free trade unions may be formed within the limits of the law." There is nothing in the Constitution which allows anybody, society, a political party or a trade union to make their membership compulsory, or a condition for the right of work. On the contrary, the Constitution makes work an inalienable right for all citizens without conditions. How could "free trade unions be free if their membership is compulsory?"

Article 111 of the Constitution says that: "No tax or duty may be imposed except by law." That provision is for public money which is collected by the Treasury; and there is no provision in the Constitution whatsoever for the compulsory collection of fees for the membership of private institutions or any other purpose connected with private institutions. How then can any law permit the Engineers Association to collect 30 fils for the building of every meter in the country. If that is legitimate, then the Medical Association could levy 30 fils for every prescription given by a doctor. The prospect of such emulations is frightening.

I believe that the compulsory membership of trade unions or any private institution is unconstitutional. There is nothing like it in any democratic country. Work, and freedom of work in any profession or place is the right of every citizen. It is an inalienable human right, and no union has the right of forcing any citizen to be its member.

It Occurred to Me
By Ali Kassay

Wildlife woes

A few years ago, when Jordan sought to encourage domestic tourism, a slogan was pasted on hillboards all over the country saying: "Your country is a paradise, explore it!" As a good citizen, always keen to obey and oblige, I heeded this directive and set forth on an exploratory mission which gave me an intimate knowledge of my country's wonders.

People of far greater eloquence than yours humbly have described the beauty of Jordan in prose and verse, and far be it from me to pitch my monosyllables against theirs. But it would be remiss not to say what a revelation and an awe-inspiring experience it was to be in Petra, the city that was immortalised in legend and song; to watch the sunrise and sunset in the desert; to stand at a vantage point in any of the desert castles and imagine the caravans approaching — to almost hear the chants of the travellers grow excited as they approach the caravanserai where they would find rest and a hot meal after their hardships on the road; or to float in the Dead Sea and let the miraculous healing powers of its salts do their bit on one's skin and pores. The most enjoyable pursuit of all, was to feast the eye on the richly diverse flora and fauna that inhabit this blessed land.

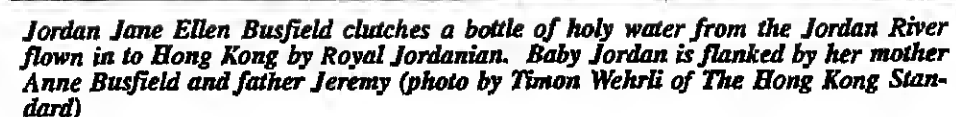
It is to this last item, the fauna, that I devote this week's article. We are all familiar with the better known species, and with the laudable work being done to preserve the more endangered among them. However, I should draw attention to a species that is most unjustly neglected, perhaps because of its abundance. Yet, for this very reason, it deserves recognition. I refer to the ubiquitous Jordanian Plastic Bag (Saccus Plasticus).

The species comes in a variety of sizes and colours, ranging from white to black or striped blue and white. Its outer skin is often beautifully decorated with motifs in Arabic calligraphic patterns which, to the expert, identify its origin. Unlike normal birds that take off against the wind, the Jordanian Plastic Bag flies in the same direction as the wind, and it often soars to great heights, where it gets tangled in high voltage electricity cables or television aerials. But the Jordanian Plastic Bag is primarily an earthbound and a very social life form, as it can be seen in huge flocks that often cover wide areas of the countryside. The most remarkable feature of the Jordanian Plastic Bag is its hardiness and adaptability, as it has successfully adapted and thrived in every conceivable habitat from city streets to the remotest and most barren corner of the desert.

The tenacity of this noble species and its resilience in the face of adversity embody the very qualities that make Jordanians great. I propose hereby to collect funds to erect a monument in honour of the Jordanian Plastic Bag. Your generous donations should be sent to the Honourable Jordanian Plastic Bag Fund, courtesy of the Jordan Times.

Occasions abound, and a secret, to boot

100 DPO



2:00 Inspector Gadget
2:30 Ghost Writers
3:00 Tomorrow's World
3:30 Amazing Stories
4:00 I Love Lucy
4:30 Tarzan
5:00 Children's Programme
Cocotte Minute
5:30 Jeux
Pago Pago
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 Magazine
Sports Et Musical
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Anything For A Laugh
8:00 Amazing Races
8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
9:10 Star Trek
10:00 News In English
10:25 Prism
10:45 Law And Order
11:45 The Silk Road
12:30 Second Thought

Jordan focuses on Aqaba, Dead Sea for tourism development projects

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The official list of the Jordanian-proposed tourism projects to be submitted at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit opening in Amman on Oct. 29 focuses on development projects for Aqaba and Dead Sea areas. Studies on four and five star hotel projects in both these areas estimated total hard and soft development costs at approximately JD 30-70 thousand per hotel room.

As tourism in Aqaba is currently concentrated on the north shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) has prepared a master plan aiming at promoting the south coast zone as an appealing touristic site, adding a further dimension to an already successful tourist destination.

At the MENA economic conference, the ARA will submit the master plan to eventual foreign and Jordanian investors, encouraging joint ventures between international and Jordanian companies. The ARA will also have direct approval authority over all projects within the south coast development project.

The "Aqaba south coast tourism development" project, to be implemented over the next ten years, consists of four main sections.

— The development of Ras Al Yamaniyya area, with eight new five-star hotels, three four-star hotels, two clusters of chalets and bungalows, a beach commercial area, a camping site for youth and complementary commercial facilities. Contractors to build three major hotels in this area have already been identified by the ARA.

— Qaboos tourist village, which will include approximately 740 residential tourist housing units, a five-star hotel, a park, a commercial centre and a water park. According to Akel Bitaji, chairman of the private sector committee on tourism at the MENA summit, development of water sports facilities in Aqaba is one of the main goals to achieve for tourism development in the port city.

— Two eighteen-hole golf courses, with a beachside resort of approximately 250 rooms and additional residential areas. The ARA has already identified and is in the process of selecting developers for the two golf courses.

— An amusement park, with Disney-style entertainment facilities. On Oct. 5, ARA President Faysal Khawneh signed a multi-million agreement with the American company Magic World for the construction of the 400 dunums entertainment park, along with a 256-room hotel and 200 chalets.

The "Aqaba south coast tourism development" project is complemented by a \$14 million worth infrastructure project that includes sub-projects for roads, (construction of interior roads, parking areas, pedestrian and cycle paths), water and waste water, (interior distribution systems, reservoirs and a waste water collection system), power, (substations and cables), and communications, (a modern telephone exchange to increase the capacity from seven thousand to seventeen thousand lines and a cellular communications station).

The "Dead Sea tourism project" to be submitted by the Jordanian government at the MENA economic summit foresees the construction of 15,000 hotel rooms and 18,000 housing units by the year 2110. The Dead Sea tourism project master plan was adopted by the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) in December 1994. The JVA fixed the leasing price of land in the area at JD 1,000 per dunum, and private sector plans are expected to start construction in 1996.

Until last year, local wars and conflicts have inhibited the development of the Dead Sea area, unique in terms of climatic and natural resources and particularly suitable for the successful treatment of many skin diseases. At the moment, tourism facilities in the Dead Sea region are limited to a small public rest house and a four-star hotel, but a great tourism development is forecasted in the new era of peace.

One of Jordan's major industries, in 1994 tourism accounted for ten per cent of the Kingdom's gross national product, and witnessed a remarkable boom after the signing of the peace treaty. According to official studies, tourism figures in the first five months of 1995 rose 43 per cent over the same period in 1994. Israelis account for about 12 per cent of the total number of tourists.

Arab Gulf states go to Amman with fears of Mideast bank

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf oil producers are going to a landmark economic summit in Amman next week ready to participate in projects that could bring them technology but hesitant to support a proposed development bank.

Some of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have rejected outright the U.S.-sponsored idea while others have said they saw no need for another fund in a region rife with financial aid institutions.

"The reasons stated by Gulf states for their objection are logical but there are other reasons as well," a Gulf-based Western diplomat told AFP. "I believe they fear it would benefit Israel more as it appears to be the most enthusiastic party for the project and they would have no control over the resources of such a bank."

"Another reason is that they will be asked to contribute most of the funds to be subscribed by regional states at a time when they are suffering from financial problems," the diplomat said.

The GCC foreign ministers have decided to participate actively in the Amman summit but there is also a decision not to contribute to the proposed development bank now, said a GCC official, who declined to be named.

Last month GCC Assistant Secretary General Abdullah Al-Quwatli of Saudi Arabia did not rule out Gulf contribution once progress is achieved in peace negotiations between Israel and Syria and Lebanon.

"Launching this bank at this stage is as if you are putting the cart before the horse. We should talk about such projects after a comprehensive peace settlement is attained," he told the press.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — are already the main subscribers to the region's eight official development funds, which have nearly \$27 billion in assets.

The funds have provided around \$40 billion in aid, mostly to Arab states, on top of more than \$60 billion extended by regional governments in loans and grants since 1970.

"Gulf states have provided as much as they could in development aid in this region," Qatari Economy Minister Mohammed Al Thani told reporters this week when asked about the plan for development bank.

"It is now difficult to bear additional financial burdens. Donors from outside the region should increase their contributions to support peace," he said.

The decline in oil prices slashed the GCC's annual oil income to less than half its level in early 1980s of more than \$150 billion.

Together with growing domestic development needs, it led to large deficits in their budgets and balance of payments, and forced them to borrow or withdraw from overseas reserves.

Gulf officials said member states, which are sending large delegations to the Amman summit, were ready to contribute to joint ventures which could support their ailing coffers and help them acquire technology to lessen reliance on volatile oil earnings.

Frederick Sicre of the Geneva-based World Economic Forum said during a Gulf tour last month he understood GCC fears of the development bank.

"The opposition by Gulf states as well as Europe is justified by the fact that they have enough institutions concerned with development," he said.

The main project, costing \$85 million, would "unify the mechanisms of information systems in the region," including the setting of wavelengths and the extension of "information networks" to isolated desert areas.

Another project would "assimilate the region's communications network with the international network," especially in visual communications, at a cost of \$20 million, plus \$4 million from each participating country.

Other projects would set up information networks for businessmen, scientists, doctors, academics, environmentalists and workers in the tourism industry, MENA said.

Jordan is best at paying its dues Iraq tops list of debtors to cash-strapped Arab League

CAIRO (AFP) — Iraq tops the list of debtors to the Arab League owed a total of \$117 million in arrears and facing a cash crisis which is threatening to close its doors for the rest of the year, officials said Tuesday.

Apart from \$10.6 million outstanding from this year's budget, members are also in arrears to the League to the pan-Arab organisation for 1995 and in back dues, followed by Libya, with debts of \$20.5 million, Sudan \$9.2 million and Morocco \$6.2 million, according to a report by Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid sent to League foreign ministers.

Jordan is by far the best at paying its annual dues, owing only \$7,849 from 1986, the only year it did not pay up.

Only Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia have paid their entire quotas for 1995, the secretary's report said.

Dr. Abdul Meguid told journalists he had sent the report to ministers Tuesday and met with delegates to discuss the 22-member League's "dangerous and worsening financial crisis."

He warned delegates failure to pay up threatened "to prevent the payment of League salaries for the last three months of 1995."

Only 53 per cent of the 1995 budget of \$27.6 million has been paid by member nations. Iraq, Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon, the Comoros and Tunisia had not paid any of the annual dues for 1995, he added.

Other nations owe some \$6.8 million for the year, only \$3.5 million of which they acknowledge to be outstanding.

The annual budget is financed by quotas ranging from one to 14 per cent of the budget fixed for each member according to its gross national product.

Some members owing \$81 million out of the \$107 million in arrears have owned up to their debts, and "some of them have proposed a schedule so they can pay," Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

But the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Algeria, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco and Yemen have all disputed a total of \$26 million which the League says they owe, and are to set up a commission to examine their reservations, he said.

A League official, who asked to remain anonymous, has told AFP that the body needed \$4.5 million to pay staff wages for October, November and December 1995. But only \$400,000 were left in the League's coffers.

In August, nine members, who in total contribute just over half the budget, asked for a two per cent reduction in their quotas, further aggravating in the body's financial woes.

The crisis forced the League in 1994 to borrow \$4.7 million from its employees pension fund and close a third of its 19 branches abroad.

Egypt to propose \$196m in projects at Amman

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will propose communications projects totalling \$196 million at the upcoming regional economic summit in Amman, the official news agency MENA reported Tuesday.

The nine projects aim at "achieving a leap" in communications and information exchange in the region, MENA said, citing Egypt's official working paper for the conference which opens Sunday.

The main project, costing \$85 million, would "unify the mechanisms of information systems in the region," including the setting of wavelengths and the extension of "information networks" to isolated desert areas.

Another project would "assimilate the region's communications network with the international network," especially in visual communications, at a cost of \$20 million, plus \$4 million from each participating country.

Other projects would set up information networks for businessmen, scientists, doctors, academics, environmentalists and workers in the tourism industry, MENA said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1995

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carver Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your finest talents emerge in early this morning so utilise them to your finest advantage. Put in economic measures this evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are inspired just how to make your home more charming and comfortable today, so get right at the necessary activities which will make it a reality.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day for communicating well with others and gaining right response. Tonight you have to be most careful in motion while on the highway.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You like the fine things of life, and today you can pursue them at your heart's content and gain them easily so you can feel prosperous.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) By combining the old fashion with the most modern today, you now can gain fine benefits. Then try to please your friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Elevate your consciousness to greater things today and forget the petty since the horizons are open to you so that you can pursue great endeavours.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Let others know of your ambitions in a most direct and sympathetic manner and today get them to assist you in gaining them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be your most tactful self when seeking a favour from a high up on a new project today and then you will get it. Later business affairs can go smoothly.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan how to enlarge your mental abilities today and then get ideas operating nicely for you to be very successful. Make new contacts with big-wigs who can be helpful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Come to a fine agreement with those who are of a practical attitude and have expertise in their ideas for business success. Show more affection for your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be with conventional people today and gain backing for your enterprises. A civic affair can bring you added prestige towards you being noticed by those in authority.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day to get your surroundings beautified and made more comfortable for close friends and loved ones. Feel pleasurable. Also make plans to expand with fellow associates.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study how to get your finest talents working successfully so that you can become more prosperous. The evening can be very fine from the romantic standpoint.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Plan how to make conditions at home better today for your loved ones, and don't be satisfied with the same kind of direction you seem to be headed.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) By showing appreciation to close friends and loved ones today for their backing, you gain even more from them towards you being successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Better self expression can gain you more of the fine things of life which mean much to you in your personal and professional life.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Pursue personal goals with conviction since you can easily gain at this time. Meet the persons you want to have in your life.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Think more idealistically and cooer with advisors so that you can make the future brighter and more liking for both you and those close to you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) This is an ideal time today to do something thoughtful for your friends and gain their admiration and goodwill which can be most helpful in your career activities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get right at those outside matters and you can make real progress today towards being quite successful. Anything of a credit nature can also be handled well.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have many ways of advancing in your chosen career field but choose the best of such and get busy on them so that you will be noticed by those in charge.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't get so involved in details that you lose out on the big issues of your interests on an important project. Confer with experts in business who will have good ideas.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Listening carefully suggestions of successful persons today can bring you advancement in your career activities. Make this a social and happy evening with loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Have talks with allies and plan the future better and be more efficient at your career activities. Avoid one who may be trying to trick you.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

THE Daily Crossword by Norma Steinberg

ACROSS

- Teacher, for short
- Continental prefix
- Inoculations
- Distinctive quality
- Cherished
- Praise
- Government agent
- Top 40 entries
- A hole —
- Branch of math
- Actor Rip
- Initials on a destroyer
- Easily gulled
- Addendum to an addendum: abbr.
- Cheering word
- Dini
- "... saw Elba"
- Be sullen
- Contract provision
- Film segment
- Country road
- Russian cooperative
- Composer
- Forem
- Malt drink
- Weeps
- Broadcast
- Omen
- Bench-warmer's plea?
- Combines
- Field
- Blow a horn
- Beach toys
- Repulsive person
- Oscar winner Thompson
- Frozen rain
- "My Way" composer
- Active one

DOWN

- Touch lightly
- roast
- Spoken
- Obsessed
- Slick
- Pretend
- Classify
- Circa
- Hits high in the air
- Searches
- Fragrance
- Danza or Bannell
- Comp. pt.
- Original
- Songs
- um (insect)
- Formed a bow
- Likely
- Pierre's dad
- Way
- Church sections
- Cad
- Noisy insect
- Viewpoint
- That is
- Kind of preview
- Close up
- Huron's neighbor
- I could — horsa!
- Press
- Singer Parry
- Residence
- Army police: abbr.
- Sailor

GIASBERGEN

CLICK CLICK
CLICK CLICK
CLICK CLICK
CLICK CLICK
CLICK CLICK

"To help me burn more calories, I subscribed to ten extra channels."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DRIPA
HECAF
KLEFIC
NUGMIP

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: CARGO MESSY CLAUSE THRASH
Answer: What the accelerated driver training class turned into — A "CRASH" COURSE

Peanuts

THE BASES ARE LOADED AGAIN, AND THERE'S STILL NOBODY OUT.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WE LIVE IN DIFFICULT TIMES.

Andy Cap

NICE TO SEE A NEW FACE, DARRIN — CAN I BUY YOU ONE?

THANKS VERY KIND OF YOU

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

LET'S NOT RUSH THINGS, EH?

OKAY — I LIKE A BIT OF MYSTERY IN A MAN

THE ONLY MYSTERY ABOUT THAT GUY IS HOW HIS WIFE EVER CAME TO MARRY HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE

Mutt'n'Jeff

MUTT, WHAT DO I DO NOW?

HOW IN THE WORLD CAN YOUR WIFE LEARN HOW TO DRIVE THAT WAY?

SHE'S LEARNING! SHE DEVELOPED AN O-TURN OUT OF A U-TURN FOR WOMEN WHO CHANGE THEIR MINDS!

WHY DON'T YOU SIT IN THE CAR WITH YOUR WIFE WHEN YOU'RE TEACHING HER?

THE CAR AND MY WIFE ARE INSURED — I'M NOT!

BRITISH SOCCER ROUNDUP

Blackburn edges Watford in League Cup match

LONDON (Ageocios) — Premier league champions Blackburn rallied to a 2-1 victory at first-division Watford Tuesday in a third-round League Cup match, saved on a strike in the 80th minute by Mike Newell.

English international Alan Shearer tied the game for Blackburn in the 58th minute — his 14th goal of the season and fifth in cup play. Watford threatened an upset over struggling Blackburn when Kevin Phillips scored in the 43rd minute to take a 1-0 lead.

Premier league side Arsenal had an easier time at first-division Barnsley, winning 3-0 on goals by Steve Bould (38th), Dutch international Dennis Bergkamp (42nd) and Martin Keown (76th). Barnsley outplayed Arsenal in the first 25 minutes on its soggy, home field but was unable to provide the finishing touches against Arsenal, the third-place team in the premier league.

Two of the other three cup games played Tuesday ended in ties. A third match was rained out after 28 minutes. All three will be replayed in the one-loss-and-out format.

Bolton, the other premier league team playing Tuesday, settled for a 0-0 draw at home against first-division Leicester.

At Birmingham City, the home side and Tranmere played a 1-1 draw. Tranmere's John McGreal scored

an own-goal in the 2nd minute to put Birmingham City up 1-0, but Ian Moore tied the match for Tranmere in the 75th minute.

In the other cup game, a match at first-division Reading was called off because of heavy rain after 28 minutes with third-division Bury leading 2-0 on goals by Phil Stant and Tony Righy. The game will be replayed and the goals will be nullified.

In the semifinals of cup play in Scotland, Aberdeen took a step closer to landing their first trophy in five years after two goals by Billy Dodds sunk mighty Rangers in a fiercely-contested semi-final clash at Hampden Park on Tuesday.

Dodds scored two second half goals in a 2-1 victory to send Aberdeen into a Nov. 26 final collision with either Doncaster or Airdrie, who play on Wednesday.

The Dons had to endure a nervous last five minutes after Oleg Salenko pulled a goal back, but they hung on and Roy Aitken's side will now be hot favourites for the trophy, with their opposition coming from the first division.

Reaching the final represents a remarkable reversal of fortune for the Pittodrie club after last season's Scottish Cup defeat against Stenhousemuir and a narrow escape from relegation via a play-off.

This was only Aberdeen's

second win in Glasgow over Rangers this decade as they target their first silverware since the 1990 Scottish Cup triumph.

It was a miserable night for Rangers, who started the match with the influential Richard Gough and six other Rangers first-teamers ruled out through injury.

There was also trouble for maverick England midfielder Paul Gascoigne, who was booked for dangerous use of the elbows during an intense but largely forgettable first-half.

Six minutes after the break, however, Aberdeen brought the game to life by breaking the deadlock through Dodds.

Salenko lost possession inside the Aberdeen half and Jess went on a surging, 60-yard run, which had Rangers on the retreat.

He slipped the ball into Dodds, who got a lucky break off a Rangers defender and then coolly squeezed it past keeper Andy Goram.

But it looked a lost cause for the champions — who have not won a domestic cup in Scotland for two years — when Dodds scored his second after 69 minutes.

This time the diminutive striker had acres of space on the far post to head a Glass cross beyond Goram.

Russian striker Salenko pulled one back for Rangers after 85 minutes with an angled shot but Aberdeen held on.



Barnsley's Nicky Eaden (top) goes over the top of Arsenal's Glen Helder, during the two teams third round league up tie (Reuters photo)

Top racers called to sell cycling to China

HONG KONG (AFP) — Weary after a long season, top international riders led by former world champion Gianni Bugno are being called on to make one last effort in the inaugural Tour of China starting on Thursday.

The seven-stage race, preceded by a prologue time trial in Hong Kong, is the first attempt to promote cycling as

a major sport in China and the communist authorities have given a lot of help.

The organisers have put up \$200,000 in prize money — the fifth biggest purse on the international calendar — to tempt the likes of Bugno and fellow Italians Daniele Nardello and Davide Cassani.

Viatcheslav Ekinov, and top Uzbek sprinter Djamolidin

Abdouljaparov.

Ekinov said the new event would have to prove itself.

"It is near the end of the season and we have to see how it is organised, how good is the race, the weather and everything," the Russian told the Hong Kong Standard.

He emphasised how with 130 races on the calendar most riders had had a tough

year. "It is not a good time in the season," he commented.

Nardello flew straight from finishing second in the Tour of Lombardy last Saturday in his native Italy. Ekinov and his Novell teammates came from a three-day race in Belgium.

But the organisers, who also put on the Tour DuPont in the United States, are determined to establish the Tour of China as a top event.

Technical director Jim Birrell, a Tour DuPont veteran, and the Chinese Cycling Association have spent six months checking the route of the races, going from Hong Kong through Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Shanghai and finishing in Beijing on November 5.

The authorities are providing 2,000 police each day to ensure the roads are clear and make sure no curious local strays on the route. Another army of volunteers has been recruited to prepare the start and finish each day.

The blockers had sought a tie up with the Tour de France organisers to link the Chinese races with the tours in France, Italy, Spain and United States in a world circuit.

But the people behind the world's top cycling race decided to link up with rival race in China, though it has suffered a setback.

Panathinaikos seek to maintain unbeaten record

AALBORG, Denmark (R) — Panathinaikos will take a major step towards securing a place in the quarter-finals of this season's European Cup if they beat Aalborg in their Champions League Group A match on Wednesday.

The sides meet in a match that replaces the original Group A fixture between Dynamo Kiev and Panathinaikos last month which ended in a 1-0 win for Kiev.

That match was expunged from the records after Kiev were disqualified from the competition by UEFA for allegedly trying to bribe the Spanish referee in charge of the game.

Aalborg, who lost to Kiev in the preliminary round were readmitted to the competition, and have lost their opening two matches in the

group to Porto and Nantes.

In contrast Panathinaikos have beaten both Porto and Nantes to emerge as the surprise Group A leaders and will make it three wins out of three if they win in Aalborg.

Panathinaikos currently lead the group with six points from four matches, followed by Porto, (4 from 3), Nantes (4 from 3) and Aalborg (0 from 2).

The Greek champions flew to Denmark without suspended midfielder Alexis Alexoudis while injured defender Thanasis Kolitsidakis travelled but is unlikely to play.

The Panathinaikos coach, Juao Ramoo Rocha of Argentina, said his team had nothing to fear but fatigue. "We are constantly on the road," he said.

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Paris and Metz face heavyweight duel

PARIS (AFP) — French league leaders Metz face Paris Saint Germain the 1994 champions in the pick of the latest round of French League matches on Thursday and Friday.

Metz have surprised the pundits this season while Paris started brilliantly but had a slightly patchy few weeks. Losing their two leading scorers Panamanian Dely Valdes and Brazilian Rai was excuse enough.

However, Paris could move to within a point of the leaders should they defeat them in Metz on Thursday. Judged on last weekend's matches Paris look as if they have regained their momentum.

While Metz struggled to a scoreless draw with lowly Lille Paris, fresh from their 1-0 victory over Glasgow Celtic

in the Cup Winners Cup, with a convincing 3-1 defeat of fellow championship rivals Auxerre.

Importantly for Luis Fernandez, the Spanish born coach, Rai looked back to full fitness and scored a delightful goal, his seventh of the season. He and French international Youri Djorkaeff will need to take their chances against a mean Metz defence who have conceded only five goals in the league this season.

Metz's forward line has performed well with summer signings Jocelyn Blanchard and Brazilian Isaias contributing five goals. These added to the seven scored by the burgeoning talents of Robert Pires and recent French squad recruit Cyrille Pouget make Paris' task no formality.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A TANNAN HIRSCH
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SWITCHING MASTERS

Both vulnerable, North deals.

NORTH
♠ K 10 9
♥ A J 5
♦ K Q 6
♣ 9 7 4 2

WEST
♠ 7 3
♥ 8 7 4
♦ 9 7 3 2
♣ A K J 10

EAST
♠ 5 4 2
♥ Q 9 3 2
♦ 8 4
♣ 6 5 3

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 8 6
♥ K 10 8
♦ A J 10 5
♣ 8

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass

1NT Pass 3♠ Pass

4♠ Pass 4NT Pass

5♠ Pass 6♠ Pass

6♠ Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

TV sports replays reveal that you get a completely different perspective of a play if seen from another angle. The same thing applies at the bridge table.

North-South bid well to an excellent small slam in spades. The key bid was North's jump to four spades to show filling cards in both of part-

ner's suits, as well as three-card trump support.

West led the king of clubs and continued the suit for declarer to ruff. Viewed from the South hand, the slam seems to depend on knowing the location of the queen of hearts. But before committing to the play, declarer elected to look at things from North's vantage point. If trump were 3-2, the normal break, the North hand is high because a heart can be discarded on the fourth diamond. The technique adopted by South is known as a "dummy reversal," and the key is having master trumps in the exposed hand.

Declarer tested trumps by cashing the ace and king, then ruffed another club with the jack of trumps. A diamond to the king provided the entry to ruff the last club and a heart to the ace permitted the table's ten of spades to be used to extract the last trump. South's three good diamonds and king of hearts took the last three tricks.

Note that, had trump been 4-1, declarer would not have been able to pursue this line. Instead, declarer would have drawn trumps and then rely on guessing which way to take the heart finesse for the fulfilling trick.

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دائرة العطاءات الحكومية
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE
INVITATION FOR BIDS
Wastewater collection and treatment systems in Greater Irbid Area sewerage system, Contract 1
Contract No. 175/95 Central
1- The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing / Government Tenders Directorate, invites German contractors who have implemented several sewer network systems of similar size in the last 10 years, and Jordanian contractors who have been pre-qualified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as a First Grade in Water and Sewerage to submit their offers for the supply, delivery and construction of Wastewater Collection System in the Greater Irbid Area. Contractors without the required experience shall be considered rejected. German contractors are strongly encouraged to joint venture or associate with the above grade local contractors.
2- The project is partially financed by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). The project consists of the construction of sewer pipes with diameters varying from 200 mm to 900 mm, of a total length of about 38 km.
3- Tender documents are available and may be examined and purchased from the Government Tenders Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Amman P.O.Box 1220, Tel (+962 6 606 757, Fax (+962 6 606 751).
4- The non-refundable fee for each set of tender documents will be JD 500.
5- The latest date for the purchase of tender documents by the eligible bidders is November 16, 1995.
6- A pre-bid conference will be held at the Water Authority's main office in Amman at 900 hours, Jordan local time on Saturday, November 18, 1995.
7- Bids are due not later than 1200 hours, Jordan local time, on Tuesday, December 12, 1995 at the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.
8- Bids will be publicly opened at 1400 hours, Jordan local time, on Tuesday, December 12, 1995, in the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.
Eng. Naser El-Madadha
Director General

CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	AMMOUN THEATRE TEL: 618274 - 618275	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
			PHILADELPHIA Jean Reno, Natalie Portman & Gary Oldman...in Leon "The Professional" Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA Nabila Obeid & Yousef Sha'ban ...in Huda & His Excellency the Minister (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 Weekend At Bernies Part II Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Kuwait wants to exclude Iraq from detente

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait says it will pursue gradual rapprochement with states friendly to Iraq both to isolate President Saddam Hussein and prevent a damaging row with Washington and Gulf Arab allies calling for reconciliation.

But, its fury undimmed five years after Iraq's occupation, it rules out rapprochement with Baghdad despite mounting pressure to beat the Arab World's deepest rift.

Arabs are sharply divided between states that helped the Gulf war alliance which ended Iraq's seven-month occupation in 1990-91 and others who sympathised with Baghdad.

The unity of the anti-Iraq bloc has begun to fray in the face of the suffering of ordinary Iraqis caused by five years of U.N. economic sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded in 1990.

Kuwait says Iraq's best weapon in its campaign against sanctions is the suffering of its own people. No one should be duped by a cynical and oppressive leader who has borne none of the hardship Saddam Hussein has brought on his people, officials say.

"Everybody sympathises with the Iraqi people's difficulties, but the question is who is against the Iraqi people?" Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah asked pointedly.

"Saddam knows he cannot control his own people unless he keeps them in a state of constant hunger," said columnist Fuad Al Hashem in Kuwait's Al Watan daily newspaper.

"If you want your dog to follow you, keep him hungry," he said.

Kuwait and its close ally Saudi Arabia say the ball is in President Saddam's court and he should help his people by accepting a U.N. offer for limited oil sales to pay for humanitarian supplies, U.N. Gulf crisis operations and Gulf war compensation.

Iraq sees the offer as an infringement of its sovereignty. Fresh pressure for reconciliation came from Kuwait's ally the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this month in the latest of several signs that Gulf Arab opinion is becoming more sympathetic to Iraq.

UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan called on Kuwait, and by implication Saudi Arabia, to mend fences with Iraq and its allies and help end the U.N. oil export embargo.

Qatar and Oman, which like other GCC states fought against Iraq in the Gulf war,

have received senior Baghdad officials in recent months.

"Sheikh Zayed's call will give momentum to Sheikh Sabah's drive towards normalisation, which will eventually happen," said Abdul Redha Assiri, a historian of Kuwait's foreign policy.

But he said the process would not be easy because Kuwait's parliament, some senior government figures and many ordinary Kuwaitis remained bitterly opposed to any rapprochement.

"Gulf countries' support for Kuwait collapses — and the (Kuwaiti) political leadership is surprised," ran Wednesday's headline in Kuwait's opposition weekly Al Talea.

"Sheikh Zayed's invitation expressed the true position of Arab countries from Morocco to Bahrain — excepting Kuwait and, maybe, Saudi Arabia," it commented.

Sheikh Sabah said he told Sheikh Zayed in talks in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday that Kuwait would continue to pursue a programme of normalisation with pro-Iraq states through bilateral moves.

Kuwait's only request was that these states demand Iraq comply with all U.N. Security Council Gulf war ceasefire resolutions, especially one requiring the return of all detained Kuwaitis.

But reconciliation with Iraq itself was a different matter, he said, because it was subject to curbs imposed by the international community through the United Nations, and only the world body could lift them.

"The question of lifting international sanctions on Iraq is no longer in the hands of Kuwait or the Arab people," he said.

Kuwait wants to avoid a damaging argument over Iraq among its closest allies in the 14-year-old GCC economic and military alliance of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

Kuwait has worked hard with Saudi Arabia to shore up support from all GCC members for the continuation of sanctions.

Any prolonged differences with other GCC states on the issue would be a blow to Kuwait efforts to block what it sees as a continuing threat from an unrepentant northern neighbour.

Kuwait has been normalising ties with pro-Iraq states, for months, officials said. "But normalisation takes time," one said.

"It is a process that goes step by step, along a ladder. It is not something done immediately, at one instant."

Arafat gets Harvard ovation, but is asked to leave N.Y. concert

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, in his first speech at a U.S. university, vowed Tuesday to continue his quest "to live peacefully in the land of peace," despite opposition from "fanatic groups."

But in New York, Mr. Arafat was quickly asked by aides to city Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to leave a New York Philharmonic concert at Avery Fisher Hall, a city hall source said.

Mr. Giuliani had made it clear last week that Mr. Arafat and Cuban President Fidel Castro, in town for the United Nations anniversary, were not welcome at the city-sponsored concert.

But the PLO chief showed up anyway at the Monday night concert at Lincoln Centre. It was not hard to spot him in his flowing black and white headress.

The mayor had Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro tell Mr. Arafat he was not an invited guest. "The delegation did leave the concert after the request was made," said the source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The whole incident occurred so quickly and quietly that few in the packed concert hall even knew it happened.

The New York Philharmonic performed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for a crowd of 2,000, including a dozen heads of state.

His message that "All Men Are Made Brothers" made the hour-long symphony a

natural for the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebration.

It's a "hymn of praise to humanity," the mayor said in opening remarks.

Willie Sands, a cable TV producer, was one of the few who got close to Mr. Arafat. He excitedly showed reporters an autograph he gave her. "The way he's all dressed up. He's a real presence," she gushed.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was not as lucky. Nobody asked for his autograph. Instead, when he arrived, Jewish protesters down the street held up signs calling him a "traitor" for the peace he made with Mr. Arafat.

At Harvard, as a small group of protesters chanted "peace yes, Arafat no," on the street outside, Mr. Arafat told a packed room at the Kennedy School of Government that the Middle East peace process was irreversible.

"Yes, we will do it, we will do it, we will do it," he said. "No return. No other choice but to continue the peace process."

The PLO leader broke no new ground in his speech, which touched on the need for international cooperation in a peace process he said he believed to be divinely ordained.

"I saw it clearly when my plane was going down," he said, referring to his escape from death in a plane crash in the Libyan desert several years ago. "It was a signal from the sky."

Jordan assembles its first vehicle

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Wednesday watched the assembly of the first Land Rover car in Jordan at Saeed Malhas Company in Amman. The Regent was briefed on the stages of production, which is carried out by Jordanian workers under the supervision of experts from the British manufacturers of the vehicle.

Accompanied to the inauguration of the project by British Ambassador Peter Hinchcliffe and two journalists from the Financial Times newspaper, the Regent toured the factory.

The plant can assemble a Land Rover vehicle in 16 hours. The Regent also visited the Jordan Worsteds Mills Company, which was established over 30 years ago, and listened to a briefing about its development and the marketing of its products locally and abroad.

The Regent toured the factory and met with technicians and workers.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Wednesday is briefed on a Land Rover assembly plant during a visit he paid to the facility (photo by Boghos)

The Regent, accompanied also by Acting Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, visited a textile and clothing

company nearby.

The Regent also visited the Sahab Industrial City where he met Dr. Fayed Subeimat.

director general of the Jordanian Industrial Estates Corporation, who spoke about (Continued on page 3)

EU reaffirms active participation in and support for MENA summit

By Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — European diplomats Wednesday denied reports that European support for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit was waning and said, "the European Union is 'totally and fully committed to the exercise'."

Juan Manuel Cabrera, the Spanish ambassador whose country is president of the EU, told a press conference: "We have had very active participation in the region and Jordan has invited our role."

Mr. Cabrera pointed out to the European role in upcoming Palestinian elections and the EU role in the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process as well as the summit.

Mr. Cabrera addressed the press conference along with

his Troika counterparts: head of the European delegation in Amman Yves Gazzo, French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet and Italian Ambassador Romualdo Bettini.

Mr. Cabrera announced that the EU and Jordan were close to reaching an agreement on Jordan's participation in a regional grant fund. In 1994, the EU committed 85 million European currency units (about \$102 million) to the fund to be tapped by countries in the region which have been successful in implementing economic reform, privatisation and modernisation programmes.

However, Mr. Gazzo explained, the fund will essentially act as a "kit" rather than earmarking money for projects. Grants will be supplemented by loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The Spanish ambassador

said that one criteria for securing a grant from the fund is the capability of absorption and the performance of the economy. "Let me say that I think Jordan is going to have a very good amount," he said.

The officials did not announce a clear stance towards the proposed Middle East development bank.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Monday a "green signal" had been sent on the Brussels-Washington axis over the proposal for the bank. Officials have said that European countries will participate on an individual basis. The Europeans have resisted the establishment of such a bank, primarily a U.S. initiative, arguing that there was a dearth of financing institutions for the Middle East.

Ongoing discussions on other proposed institutions

are the Middle East North African Financial Intermediary Organisation (MENA-FIO), which would provide a framework for policy coordination.

None of the EU officials would be drawn into discussing concrete details. "It would be risky to predict the outcome of discussions," said Mr. Bajelet. "The object is a financial institution that matches the needs and requirements of the different regional parties," said Mr. Bajelet, "and to mobilise financing for such a project."

"Prospects for an acceptable arrangement before the opening of the summit look good," said Mr. Cabrera, who confirmed that the EU supported the idea that other institutions such as a regional business council and a regional tourism council be based in Amman.

Appeals court rules on Kurd MPs today

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's highest appeal court is to rule Thursday on the fate of eight Kurdish members of parliament (MPs) sentenced to heavy jail terms by a state security tribunal for allegedly promoting rebellion.

The court's decision could have a bearing on Ankara's relations with the European Union (EU), whose Strasbourg parliament has demanded the release of the MPs, particularly the ratification of customs agreement due in December.

At the preliminary session of the Court of Cassation on Sept. 21 the prosecution asked for five of the eight deputies to be acquitted but said the sentences on the three others should stand.

If the court agrees, Ahmet Turk and Orhan Dogan, sentenced to 15 years each, plus Sedat Yurtas (seven-and-a-half years), could be freed, pending the return of their case to the security court.

Two others, Sirri Sakik and Mahmut Alinak, who were jailed for three-and-a-half years, have already been provisionally released, having spent nearly a third of their sentence in custody.

However, Hatip Dicle,

Selim Sadak and Levla Zana, who was tipped for the Nobel Peace Prize awarded this month, would have 15 year-term confirmed.

Seven of the deputies were members of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP), who were deprived of their seats in parliament when the party was banned in June 1994.

Mr. Alinak had resigned from the DEP beforehand and is still officially a member of parliament.

Ms. Zana, Mr. Dicle, Mr. Turk, Mr. Dogan and Mr. Sadak were convicted of forming and belonging to an illegal group, meaning the banned Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has been fighting a vicious war with Ankara in Kurdish-majority regions of Turkey since 1984.

Mr. Yurtas was sentenced for aiding and supporting an illegal group, while Mr. Sakik and Mr. Alinak were convicted under anti-terrorist legislation.

The security court originally accused them of separatism and prejudicing the integrity of the state, offences that could have attracted the death penalty, but finally preferred lesser charges.

London expels Iraqi administrative attache

LONDON (Agencies) — The British government said on Wednesday it has ordered the expulsion of Khamis Khalaf Al Ajili, an Iraqi diplomat based in London.

The Foreign Office said the Iraqi diplomat had been asked to leave the country on the grounds that he had been engaged in activities "incompatible with his diplomatic status."

Mr. Ajili, who is administrative attache at the Iraqi interests section of the Jordanian embassy, has been given a deadline of Oct. 31 by which to leave the country.

The spokesman from the Foreign Office added: "He declined to elaborate on the reasons for the expulsion."

Britain severed formal diplomatic ties with Baghdad after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, but a small interests section attached to the Jordanian embassy in London remains.

Iraq meanwhile strongly denied that an Iraqi spy ring had been set up in Mauritania and denounced the expulsion of its ambassador from the country.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman told the official agency INA: "We don't just deny the words of the Mauritanian leaders about an Iraqi spy

network in Mauritania, but we strongly condemn them."

"It is clear that the Mauritanian leaders have been well paid by those who spend vast sums to destroy relations between Arab countries and Iraq's reputation."

"How can we explain these declarations otherwise? What is there to spy on in Mauritania?" he asked.

The Iraqi ambassador in Nouakchott, Anwar Molad Bayan, was summoned to the Foreign Minister there late Monday and told he had 72 hours to leave, Mauritanian government officials said.

About 20 young Mauritanians sympathetic to Iraq's ruling Bath Party were also arrested.

Mauritanian Interior Minister Mohammad Lemine Salem Ould Dah said Monday: "This network is funded by the Iraqi secret services and receives its orders directly from them. Its object was to supply them with precise information on strategic positions of the Mauritanian state."

The Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman said Baghdad had hoped in vain that Mauritania would go back on its decision. He did not say if Iraq would take any tit-for-tat measures.

U.S., Syria make little progress to restart peace talks

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his Syrian counterpart, Farouq Al Sharaa, made little progress Tuesday in restarting the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations, a State Department spokesman said.

The two diplomats, meeting in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations' 50th anniversary events, almost exclusively discussed security issues, spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"There are some outstanding differences between Israel and Syria and they remain," he said, noting in particular the security arrangements which would accompany any Israeli withdrawal from Syria's Golan Heights.

"I can't report any major progress in that regard," he said.

Israel has demanded that it be allowed to have an early warning station on the Golan but Syria has refused, saying air surveillance could assure Israel of security.

Their talks barely have advanced since they began in 1991 and have been stalled since June, when the two countries' chiefs-of-staff met in Washington.

Addressing the U.N. general assembly later Tuesday, Mr. Sharaa blamed Israel for the deadlock and accused it of trying to "frustrate the U.S. peace initiative" in the same way he alleged it had wrecked U.N. peace efforts.

"The real enemies of peace are those who annexed Jerusalem and the Golan, who encouraged the occupation of the settlement colonies ... and who continue to reject a complete withdrawal (from the Golan) and full and global peace proposed by Syria," he told the assembly during the U.N.'s 50th anniversary celebrations.

"The people of the regions themselves, Arabs and Israelis, understand that peace is a long way off," he said, even if Israel is seeking to "fool the world" into believing that "a long distance has been covered on the way to peace."

"If this chance for peace is lost, and we hope that it will not be, Israel will bear a historic responsibility before the world."

Mr. Burns characterised the discussion between Mr. Christopher and Mr. Sharaa as "useful," but emphasised, "More work needs to be done."

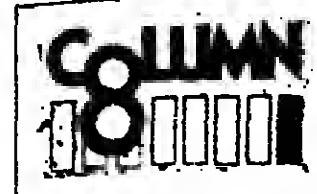
Mr. Christopher will meet with Israeli officials on the sidelines of Mr. Middle East economic conference scheduled in Amman next Sunday and Monday, Mr. Burns said.

The situation in Lebanon was not addressed in the 70-minute discussion in which Mr. Christopher was accompanied notably by U.S. Mideast envoy Dennis Ross.

Mr. Christopher met Saturday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, also in New York for the U.N. celebrations.

Mr. Rabin seized the occasion to tell him that an increase in activities by Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, "sponsored by Syria," constituted a "bad sign" for the Middle East peace process, Israeli diplomats said.

But Mr. Rabin had indicated his interest in resuming a dialogue with the Syrian government on the basis of elements of understanding arrived at in Washington last June, they said.



Sharon Stone receives France's top artistic honour

PARIS (AP) — Basic Instinct star Sharon Stone received France's highest artistic honour, the Medal of the Chevalier of Arts and Letters, Philippe Douste-Blazy, France's minister of culture, pinned the green and silver medal on Ms. Stone's lapel to a red-carpet ceremony at the ministry. The 37-year-old actress, who arrived by Concord from New York, was treated to dinner Tuesday night by U.S. Ambassador Pamela Harriman. During her stay in Paris, Ms. Stone will wear exclusively designer clothes by Valentino and was expected to be the guest of honour Wednesday night at Maxim's. In her latest film, Sam Kaimi's "Dead Or Alive" which showed at the Cannes Film Festival, Ms. Stone played the role of a leather-clad cowgirl.

Charlie Chaplin's hat, cane up for auction

LONDON (APF) — A hat and cane owned by Charlie Chaplin — reputedly among his favourites — will go on the auction block on Dec. 14 along with other movie memorabilia, Christie's auction house said. A similar but newer hat and cane belonging to the comic film genius sold at auction for £50,000 (\$77,500) in 1993.

The pair going on sale in December were part of the estate of Chaplin's half-brother Wheeler Dryden, who took possession of them when the Chaplin Studios were liquidated in 1952. A military uniform used by Chaplin in the film "The Great Dictator," a 1940 satirical portrait of Hitler, also up for grabs should fetch between £4,000-6,000 (\$6,200-9,300). Among other objects for sale will be several costumes worn by Peter O'Toole in the 1962 Lawrence of Arabia, part of the C-3PO robot from "The Empire Strikes Back," and a whip made from Kangaroo skin used by Harrison Ford in Indiana Jones.

Sleepwalker wins compensation for injuries

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Three years after he sleepwalked out of a window and broke both legs, Ole Christian Therkelsen finally forced his insurance company to accept the two-story fall as an accident and pay up. Mr. Therkelsen, now 24, was an army recruit on his way home for Christmas break in 1991 when he stopped at the military hotel in Oslo for the night, the Oslo newspaper Aftenposten reported Tuesday. A few hours after he went to bed, he woke up in pain and on the ground two floors below his room, after apparently marching out the window in his sleep. He broke his legs and was listed as 15 per cent disabled by his doctors, which normally would have brought compensation from his insurance company. But his insurer, Samvirke, rejected his claim, saying in a letter that "injuries sustained while sleeping are not seen as random and unexpected and are thus not accidental." Mr. Therkelsen took the case to the National Insurance Appeals Board, which ruled that the sleepwalking injuries certainly were not intentional. The insurance company and the military are paying him about \$34,000 in medical compensation.

Talibans race the elements in bid to take Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — The Taliban Islamic militia, dug in south of Kabul, have about a month to achieve their aim of taking the city before the Afghan winter puts a brake on military activities.

As the days wear on, the city's residents are nervously asking whether the group which in just over a year has taken control of all of southern Afghanistan will be able to achieve its sworn objective.

Publicly, President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government is playing down the danger, pointing out that the southern front line has stabilised and Taliban offensives have so far been repulsed.

But privately officials admit the situation is grave. Former communist president Najibullah controlled more territory than the present

government at the start of 1992, several months before he fell.

"The government is no longer fighting. It is fighting to survive," one diplomat commented.

With the front line just five kilometres south of the city, Kabul is abuzz with unverifiable and contradictory rumours.

According to some, the Taliban are already infiltrating the city. According to others the presidential camp's military leader Ahmad Shah Masoud is preparing to evacuate.

Another story doing the rounds is that Mr. Masoud, a legendary hero of the 1980s war against Soviet invaders, has aimed Luna missiles at the presidential palace ahead of the Taliban's expected entry into the capital.

Meanwhile, a new front has opened up on the north-west, one that is vital for the government's supply lines. Heavy reinforcements have been sent towards the 2,987-metre Shibar Pass, where the government is preparing a counter-offensive towards the central town of Bamyan.

Only four countries still have embassies in Kabul — namely India, Iran, Turkey and Indonesia. The members of the tiny diplomatic corps are all asking the same question: How much support is Pakistan giving the Taliban?

Despite Islamabad's repeated denials, everyone in Kabul believes that the Taliban are actively supported by Pakistan. Radio Kabul, the official station, speaks of the "Talibans of Benazir Bhutto," the Pakistani prime minister.

On the Rishkor front line south of the city, members of the pro-government side point to the hills where the Taliban are dug in and say: "Those are the Pakistanis over there."

The other big unknown is the position of Rashid Dostum. A former pillar of the communist regime, General Dostum controls half a dozen provinces in northern Afghanistan from his "capital" at Mazar-e-Sharif.

According to diplomatic sources, Gen. Dostum is under pressure from two sides. Pakistan would like him to back the Taliban. But Uzbekistan would like to see him forge an alliance with Mr. Masoud, fearing a powerful fundamentalist movement one day reaching

the borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Travellers from the north say the Uzbek authorities recently stopped fuel supplies to Mazar, making prices skyrocket. Electricity was also briefly cut off.

These measures are apparently meant to show Gen. Dostum that Tashkent's views cannot be ignored.

But an alliance between Gen. Dostum and Mr. Masoud would signal a clear ethnic division of the country, north against south, against Taliban Pashtuns, and could ultimately mean Afghanistan splitting up. "That would be the beginning of a catastrophe," one Western analyst said.

Sharon Stone receives France's top artistic honour

PARIS (AP) — France's highest artistic honour, the *Légion d'honneur*, was bestowed on Sharon Stone on Tuesday night by President Jacques Chirac.

Charlie Chaplin's hat, cane up for auction

LONDON (AP) — A hat worn by Charlie Chaplin in the 1930s is being auctioned in London.

Sleepwalker wins compensation for injuries

PARIS (AP) — A man who fell asleep while walking on a Paris sidewalk has won compensation for his injuries.

Jordan Times 20th Anniversary

A special supplement issued by the Jordan Times on the occasion of the newspaper's 20th anniversary

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1995

The story of the Jordan Times

By George Hawatmeh
Editor-in-Chief



THE JORDAN Times today marks an unprecedented occasion—20 years of uninterrupted existence by an English-language Jordanian daily newspaper.

The occasion will be celebrated not only because the Jordan Times has survived against, at times, insurmountable odds, but also because the newspaper has achieved a decent level of respectability, maturity and reliability at this very tender age.

Here are a couple of examples on the touch-and-go situation that the paper had found itself in when the odds against its survival were rather short.

The first one is when HRH Crown Prince Hassan was so concerned about the daily's ability to survive that he called for the establishment of a "friends of the Jordan Times" society in the late seventies.

This indicates that the newspaper was looked upon as some sort of "endangered species" that needed protection and support from the outside. Otherwise it would collapse.

The second example is when a former minister of information, Dr. Hani Khasawneh, walked into the Jordan Times' offices one day in 1988 and told its editors that they either began to see their newspaper as the Izvestia of Jordan (Izvestia was the official mouthpiece of the Soviet government at the time) or else they would all face measures they did not like.

These were the martial law days when the country was also witnessing a collapse in the economy, and Dr. Khasawneh was apparently echoing Prime Minister Zaid Rifai's views at the time.

Mr. Rifai had conveyed to the editor of the newspaper essentially the same message when he stressed a few months earlier that what he and his first government had in mind was basically a public relations—or image-polishing—enterprise upon recommending the establishment of the Jordan Times.

Now compare the newspaper as an independent daily (which is what we hope it is now) to what governments like that of Mr. Rifai wanted it to be and you could easily see the weight of the challenge that the Times had to carry on its shoulders during difficult times.

Had autocracy won the paper could have easily folded under this weight or it might have been a different, most probably irrelevant, publication today, like the Syria Times or the Baghdad Observer.

We celebrate our 20th anniversary with much fanfare, albeit all is done in terms of articles and words because today the Jordan Times is self-sufficient and its chances of surviving and even prospering are greater than at any time before. Furthermore, there has been a positive change in attitude towards the newspaper, especially by the officialdom, and including Mr. Rifai.

The question of survivability and prosperity of an English-language daily in a country like Jordan has never been easy to answer. Suffice it to say though that the challenge the newspaper has faced is not only political but also economic and organisational.

Last year, for the first time in its history, the Jordan Times made a profit—not much, some JD 80,000, but nevertheless a profit. That means that it had always been operating under the most difficult of economic conditions. Thus bad it been established merely as a profit-making enterprise, it might have folded long ago.

On the other hand, when you compare its financial standing, and budget, to some other publications, locally and world-wide, you could only conclude that, indeed, it is an achievement for this newspaper to still be here and at least as useful as it is.

We have heard that Time magazine's revenues from advertising were \$1.35 billion dollars in 1994, while a newspaper like Britain's Daily Telegraph made a profit of £40 million a couple of years earlier, the Economist magazine £20 million, and Al Ra'i nearly JD 2.0 million in 1994.

Therefore, and while I am not trying to compare between the quality of news and views and production in our newspaper with those in others, I can say that what we are doing with an annual budget of about \$0.5 million is probably not bad at all.

In this context, I am happy to report that in mid-1995 the newspaper started to install a modern computer system, having done all our editing and reporting work before on

one outdated word processor and 3 typewriters that broke down almost every day.

With the installation of our new Apple system, and the physical expansion into new office space, the Jordan Times will not only have finally satisfied long-sought infrastructural needs, further strengthening its survivability into the future, but will have also taken a major step towards improving the quality of production, whether in terms of layout or printing or reducing typesetting errors, which have been a source of irritation for our readers for so long.

I just hope that the new technology and space will lead us to refocus efforts on the editorial content of the newspaper as well as expanding its coverage, distribution and circulation.

Let me be frank, though, on a couple of worries I still have, regarding the post 20th-anniversary era of the Jordan Times history.

First, and most evident, is the availability of local manpower, i.e. professional Jordanian journalists, who could meet the challenge of taking the Jordan Times into the next century (and millennium) and who would strive to raise its plateau to new heights on constant basis.

As things stand now, we have an experienced team of editors who would ensure continuity, with more or less the same standards of today, for I hope, several years to come. But I have been most concerned with the dilapidating speed at which promising reporters have been lured away from the newspaper to more lucrative jobs, in the media itself and outside. Of course, one has to be proud of the fact that

many of those who were recruited and trained by the Times went on to become international correspondents, media directors and even ambassadors.

But, unfortunately, the brain-drain is straining the already limited resources of a newspaper like ours, and it is unlikely to stop any time soon.

Which brings me to the other big worry that I have, and that is the organisational aspect of the Jordan Times. As it is now, the newspaper has what I call a hard-won, but still tenuous, independence on the editorial side only. And unless that independence is followed up by an organisational (financial and administrative) independence, it will be extremely difficult not only to halt the brain-drain but also to meet the newspaper's basic goals of consolidation, expansion and progress.

I shall not delve into too much detail here, except to say that Jordan and foreign media institutions who take interest in the Kingdom and the Middle East as a whole will continue to be media-strapped for the Jordan Times' type of graduates for some years down the road.

It is thus obvious to me that unless an institution like the Jordan Times is given the leeway to consolidate and expand, through granting it at least some form of financial and administrative independence in order to attract and train promising new journalists, the cause of responsible and objective journalism in Jordan will suffer as a result.

Let me now refocus attention on the other parameters that the Jordan Times has employed in order to stay afloat and be what and where it is today.

The principle that has guided us in editing the Jordan Times over the years has been that which says "A good newspaper is like a nation talking to itself." Translated into practical words, the quotation from Arthur Miller means that, in our daily work, we at the Jordan Times try to address not a community of foreigners but the whole community in Jordan, especially those who read us or are likely to do so.

Probably most of our readers are Jordanian citizens who want and need to know exactly what the rest of Jordanians (especially those who can read Arabic) read and hear. We are always aware of such need and constantly strive to cover whatever is happening in Jordan, positive or negative, so that all our readers have an equal chance to be well-informed. Even the passing foreigner, we believe, should know about Jordan as much as he or she could, because ultimately we cannot make friends with anyone who does not know who we really are and what this society is all about.

I mean to say that we are not and cannot be in the business of polishing the image of our society and of drawing a rosy picture of what Jordanians do. No society is perfect, and we are no different, and people know it. So we would do well to discover what we are while putting out a newspaper, just as Arthur Miller thought good newspapers should do.

We take seriously the definition of journalism as the pursuit of truth. We take note of continuous assertions by officials that journalists are there basically to serve the causes and ideals of the nation. But we often do not see eye-to-eye with them on where Jordan's real interests lie. In any way, we see no contradiction between serving the nation and doing our job as journalists. We are not at the stage yet where we can view a divergence of ideals and goals between the state and its journalists.

We are, by inclination, a liberal newspaper. We believe in change, in democracy, in political pluralism, in human rights, in a largely free market economy, in social justice, in equality and in the rule of law.

Some people, mainly in the establishment, think we are ultra-liberal, but that does not faze us a bit. The Jordanian society can do with a few outspoken liberals who employ words and thoughts in countering unnecessary conservatism, traditionalism and backwardness in many aspects of our lives.

Last but not least we believe in responsible journalism, where news and facts are checked for accuracy, views and analysis for balance and objectivity, and sources for credibility and integrity.

This is where we stand today, and I hope the positive trend will continue to be there in the future.

A word from the publisher



Mahmoud Al Kayed

TWENTY YEARS ago, the first issue of the Jordan Times appeared on the newsstands alongside its sister Arabic daily Al Ra'i.

The birth of the newspaper, at the time, was a source of great pride for the Jordan Press Foundation, which publishes both newspapers, and for Jordanians generally.

To publish a daily newspaper in English was not an easy job.

There were inevitable technical difficulties, a lack of qualified human resources, in addition to numerous other obstacles that the founders encountered at the time.

But our enthusiastic and determined colleagues managed to turn the dream into reality. The fact that the Jordan Times rolled off the presses in the first place, fared extremely well in comparison to other English-language newspapers in the region, and is what it is today, twenty years later, testifies to the devotion of all those who made it a success story.

I am always heartened to hear that many people think it is the best English daily in the whole Arab region.

I can only share in this belief since I know personally the people who work for it and experience first hand, their dedication in producing a reliable and objective newspaper, day in and day out.

The Jordan Times has been and will continue to be a forum for all those with news and views that are fit to print. It has never wavered in its commitment towards achieving freedom of the press, democracy, political pluralism and human rights, while at the same time keeping the higher interests of the state and its people, and the Arab causes generally, at heart.

The Jordan Times' long-held tradition of opposing and rejecting sectarianism and factionalism in our society has likewise been a source of tremendous inspiration for all those of us here at the Jordan Press Foundation.

Members of the board and all members of the staff at Al Ra'i join me in congratulating our colleagues at the Jordan Times on their newspaper's 20th anniversary. We pledge total support for their continued success, both as Jordan's open window on the outside world and in their endeavours to serve the best interests of the community and our international guests here at home.

I take this opportunity to note with gratitude the efforts made by the colleagues who worked for the Jordan Times throughout its history.

The foundation is indebted not only to those who are still working for the newspaper 20 years later, but also to those who have left us to take up new positions in the press and other fields elsewhere, and there are many.

While their contribution to the Jordan Times will never be forgotten, the contribution of the Jordan Times to progress in the Kingdom and the cause of journalism generally will always be appreciated and cherished by all of us.

The writer is chairman of the board of directors of the Jordan Press Foundation

From the '70s to the '90s: Changing with the Times

By Rami Khouri



Rami Khouri now owns and manages Al-Kubba publishing house. He continues to contribute a weekly column to the Jordan Times and other international newspapers.

I HAVE had the pleasure of being associated with the Jordan Times since its inception in October 1975, when I assumed the editorship of the newspaper only a few days after its first issue had appeared.

The last two decades have been a period of sustained growth and transformation for the newspaper, as for Jordan as a whole.

Anyone who walks into the spacious, air-conditioned, high-tech editorial offices of the newspaper today may not believe how we started in the early days.

The Jordan Times started life in two small rooms on the second floor of the original Jordan Press Foundation—Al Ra'i building on University Road. The fact that the newspaper appeared at all in the closing months of 1975 was something of a minor daily miracle. When I assumed the editorship, the unique production system was as follows: a young American fellow came in during the morning, chose the stories he liked from the Reuters wire, edited them quickly and sent them down to the

basement for typesetting, where a middle-aged Egyptian wizard named Abu Siraj set the stories in lead type on a venerable old Linotype machine that he repaired himself when necessary—sometimes manufacturing his own spare parts.

Watching that old lead typesetting machine clank and groan and spit out its shiny little bars of text was a thrill that will long remain with me—a lingering historical link between the later days of the industrial revolution in Europe and the diffusion of Western technology and media concepts around the world.

Several translators came into work in the afternoon and started translating most of the stories from the Jordan News Agency, and these were usually sent down to the basement for typesetting.

An elderly Lebanese man named Abu Gabi spent the evening setting headlines by hand, picking out individual metal letters and arranging them in a band-held contraption until they formed the desired head-

line. The editors went down to the basement in the evening, sorted through the typeset stories, and started putting them together into pages (there were only four pages when we started).

Then Abu Gabi took all the typeset metal columns of text and the headlines and arranged them into the shape of the final page, within a large metal frame that held the page together.

A sheet of paper was then placed above the inked metal type and a roller was passed over the paper, to produce the final page that was sent for printing.

The progress from the old days of hot metal type and band-set headlines to today's computer-generated pages and photos is one of the more satisfying aspects of the Jordan Times' development—but not the most important.

That designation would have to go, in my opinion, to the newspaper's role in slowly but persistently contributing to an expansion of the limits of the politically and journalistically permissible in the country.

I remember fondly the early days of the newspaper, when Zeid Rifai, Mudar Badran and Abdul Hamid Sharaf were prime ministers, and when Adnan Abu Odeh was usually the information minister.

The most persistent theme of our early years was a running debate with the government about the role and purpose of the Jordan Times. The state tended to see us only as a service for foreigners and tourists, providing information in Eng-

lish about the great achievements of the government, the television listings, and other important issues.

The state thought that we should be primarily an English-language version of the Arabic-language press.

We saw ourselves in a slightly different manner. We thought the Jordan Times had to be different from the Arabic-language press, because of its predominantly foreign audience. We would have limited credibility if we limited

ourselves to mirroring government viewpoints.

This was a useful but insufficient service for an English-language newspaper, because this was already being done by the state's television and radio services.

We thought that the Jordan Times could offer a service to foreigners and Jordanians alike. It could attempt gradually to develop new journalistic techniques and concepts that were not being applied locally. We did some investigative reporting, in-depth features, profiles, long interviews, series, photo-stories, and other things that were novel for Jordan.

We also consciously sought to expand the limits of the politically permissible. We published commentaries, interviews and editorials that the Arabic-language press would find too controversial, mainly because we occasionally dared to express a viewpoint that was slightly different from the government's viewpoint. Today, of course, this is routine. In the late 1970s, it was

almost foolhardy. We dared to do this because we felt that we had to do it in order to be credible and useful.

The government officials we had to contend with reacted in different ways. Mr. Rifai, a man of considerable intellectual power and political smarts, probably recognised that we were doing something intellectually reasonable, but he also felt it to be politically irritating.

His admonitions, like his patience, were compelling. The very sophisticated Abdul Hamid Sharaf knew that we were doing the right thing in trying to liberalise and improve the journalistic profession: he charmed the shoes off us in convincing us that we were best advised to make history in a peculiarly Jordanian manner, that is, gradually, without offending or shocking.

Mudar Badran seemed to find us annoying more than dangerous, but being the perfect Jordanian gentleman he seemed to be, satisfied himself with handing down the occasional scolding.

Adnan Abu Odeh was

perpetually frustrated with the erratic and often mediocre quality of the press, and spent much of his time during meetings with editors cajoling us to be more activist, probing, and analytical—but also stressing the importance of accuracy.

We learned quickly in the late 1970s that our desire to expand the boundaries of Jordanian journalism was going to keep landing us in trouble with the authorities and with society as a whole.

Art reviews, for example, were a problem, because if our art critic spoke negatively about any artist's work the owners of the newspaper were sure to get phone calls the next day from some influential relative of the offended artist.

Satire was another problem, for Jordanian culture did not easily accept satire as a tool of journalistic comment. What we thought was "cute" others found to be offensive, so we toned down the satirical commentaries and waited for history to run its course.

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THE JORDAN Times is now in its 20th year. Its owner, the Jordan Press Foundation, conceived its birth out of a pressing need to fill the international language gap in the country's print media. No-one at the time could guess how long the Times would last. In the West Bank, English-language newspapers had been set up, but never with any lasting success.

On this side of the river, this newspaper was to be the first the country was to gain.

Mahmoud Al Kayed and Mohammad Al Amad were both with the Arabic sister daily Al Ra'i when the Jordan Times first rolled off the printing press.

Mr. Kayed was a member of the board of directors at the Jordan Press Foundation (JPF) and managing editor at Al Ra'i Arabic daily and Mr. Amad was assistant director general of the same newspaper. Both were witnesses to the birth of the Jordan Times.

Two years after the newspaper was launched, Raja Elissa joined the JPF as partner and member of the board.

The extraordinary (in the literal sense of the word) fact about the Jordan Times is that it never needed to make profit to survive. Unlike its Palestine and West Bank predecessors at the time which witnessed more financially-aggravated foldings than they did publications, the Times was from the start fully supported by the Jordan Press Foundation.

"The Jordan Times made no financial profits during the first 18 years of its life," states Mr. Amad, now director general of the foundation. "But we're still proud of it; we consider it a highly prestigious newspaper."

On Oct. 26, 1975, when the first awkward-looking Jordan Times appeared, the foreign community barely numbered a few thousand, tourism hardly made a difference, and local readership could not be relied

Three men and a baby (newspaper)

Founders recall birth of a unique experiment

upon. Still, the paper took off with a promise made by the Ministry of Information at the time, in order to encourage its launch, to buy up to 1,000 copies each day for a specified period of time.

"Which, of course, never happened," as Mr. Amad says.

He is proud to add that the Jordan Times never received any financial aid from any outside source.

"A modest beginning," says Mr. Kayed, "a newspaper that trained itself along with its journalists, that saw them graduate, move on; a newspaper that served a national purpose, that was clearly different from the outset and that has carried this difference to the highest of standards and to the best of purposes."

But the newspaper has also seen its share of problems. The problem of an English-language newspaper in a society that lacked the culture of reading, let alone reading in a language not its own, meant that for a long time the Jordan Times had to struggle along.

The newspaper, as all three men foresaw, would by virtue of its language difference, commit itself to more liberal, open policies.

"The Jordan Times' limited readership was never a factor to undermine it," Mr. Kayed says. "It was, on the contrary, a bonus. We had a limited but good quality readership."

Nevertheless, during the first

10 years of its life the newspaper was still an experiment, experiencing nightmarish episodes of blunders.

But the cultural atmosphere has changed dramatically since 1975.

According to Mr. Elissa, intellectual circles have grown, foreign visitors have nothing but praise for the newspaper, and the new climate of openness and democracy has meant that the newspaper can now look forward to better times, and a more stable future.

"The newspaper has always been a source of pride for the (Jordan Press) Foundation," he says.

The difference between the Jordan Times and its sister Al Ra'i, Mr. Kayed admits, is in the quality of news.

"The Jordan Times has always been the more intrepid paper, the one to take risks. It's a liberal paper, independent, more analytical," he says.

"Daring" is the word Mr. Elissa opts to use in his description of the newspaper.

"We were less prone to self-censorship," he says. "We took risks, both with finances and news content," Mr. Elissa says and then tells the story of how the newspaper's price was raised, without government knowledge or approval, during the 1982 Arab summit when the newspaper was in high demand by foreign journalists.

"We took no-one's permission," Mr. Elissa recalls. "The

editor was consulted, arrangements were made and the price was raised accordingly. And the government didn't notice the change till three months later. By then it was too late to reverse the situation."

As for news content, Mr. Elissa and Mr. Kayed both say the Jordan Times is more concerned about clarity and reliability of news than are the Arabic newspapers generally.

Mr. Elissa cites the finance and economic pages as examples.

"That is news an ordinary reader can easily understand and you don't have to be an expert to understand currency rates and market shares like you do if you read the other papers," he says.

If the Jordan Times used to cater for an elitist group of university professors, expatriates and a handful of foreigners, this is no longer the case.

In Jordan now, more and more people turn to the Jordan Times as the source of reliable news, as a newspaper that offers concise information and coverage on local and finance news as well as international sports, areas that have been cited as being of high interest to both foreigners and Jordanians.

Mr. Elissa foresees a "natural" increase in circulation for the Jordan Times. An increase that is estimated at five to 10 per cent every year in circulation sales. He attributes this fact to the country's developing econo-

my, its slow but certain venture into international markets.

"Look, more and more people want to get better news coverage and this they can find at the Jordan Times," he says.

When it comes to future prospects, Mr. Amad looks towards West Bank distribution. "But only when cultural agreements between us and the Palestine National Authority are drawn up," he says.

Mr. Elissa sees that aspect as being the ultimate challenge for the Jordan Times.

"More competition, more opportunity to sell and the Israeli market will automatically open up," he says.

But to sell openly to the Israeli market is not a step Mr. Kayed sees as possible at this stage.

"We have to wait and see how serious they (the Israelis) are about peace."

Expansion into an already expanding market economy is an inevitable next step for a newspaper that has witnessed a remarkable increase in advertising and sales distribution over the past two years.

"Even without competition from abroad," says Mr. Elissa, "the Jordan Times remains a very competitive newspaper."

Mr. Kayed's outlook for the newspaper offers a view of a newspaper run and produced by modern information technology. The Times has recently taken steps to upgrade itself for entry into the world of high-tech productivity, already improving



Mohammad Amad (top) is Director General of the JPF; Raja Elissa (right) is chairman of the board and director general of the Jordan Distribution Agency



part of its production methods through computerisation and office automation.

"We're ready for challenges," he says. "This is a newspaper that prides itself in being a quality product. It expresses the Jordanian voice through news cov-

erage that is honest, reliable and clear."

"What makes me happy," states Mr. Kayed, "is the amount of satisfied readership the newspaper has gained. That is what I consider the real profits of the Jordan Times."

'The clear and cold facts'

The Jordan Times and domestic issues

By Dr. Musa Keilani

IT HAS become an established fact that the Jordan Times is playing not too small a role in influencing Jordan's policy decisions. It is no secret that the country's top leaders' daily routine includes a close reading of the newspaper, which more often than not, provides an insight into the behind-the-scenes implications of events.

I would not like to turn this piece of writing into another public relations exercise for the Jordan Times, but then one has to acknowledge facts as they are.

When I was serving in Bahrain as Jordan's ambassador, many media consultants used to compare the Jordan Times with other English-language newspapers in the Arab World.

In their eyes, the Jordan Times stood tall (and continues to this day, I think) among its Arab counterparts, particularly in the Gulf states where there is a very large English-reading expatriate community. This was due to more than one reason, I think.

The first is the extensive and detailed coverage that the Jordan Times offers on domestic politics.

Many other English-language newspapers in the Arab World are much larger in size (number of pages and consequently have more news items), and are literally much more colourful, owing to a high volume of advertisements, and therefore income—luxuries that the Jordan Times simply cannot afford.

But that has not stopped the paper from going from strength to strength and reaching the top layer of the English-language press in the Arab World.

My understanding of the Jordan Times' approach is that the paper believes that it has to focus on Jordanian issues more than anything else.

The logic is simple: if a Jordanian newspaper does not give its readers clear and cold facts as they come and extend excellent coverage of local events, then who or what can be expected to do so?

Without mentioning names, I would like to point out that the nearly dozen English-language newspapers in the Gulf states focus mostly on external issues. A dock strike in India, violence in Pakistan, demonstrations in Bangladesh and the conflict in Sri Lanka are only examples of the so-called "lead stories" that they carry.

Burning political issues at home are very conveniently left to the foreign media, including the international news agencies that operate out of the Gulf.

That is what distinguishes the Jordan Times, which has never hesitated in tackling any local political issue regardless of the sensitivities involved, even if that had to be done somehow belatedly a number of times.

In the 1980s, I was a regular columnist for the Jordan Times, a pleasure



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that I had to forego when I was appointed head of the Press and Publications Department of the Ministry of Information. That position would not allow me the luxury of maintaining a column in a local paper when my actual job involved the very monitoring of the local press.

In that capacity and having closely observed the trend of the newspaper since its inception, I came to the conclusion that the bold coverage of local issues by the Jordan Times is owed largely to its own introduction of "political reporting" when no Jordanian Arabic newspaper could or would touch anything more than the official bandwagons on political issues.

More often than not, one would see in those Arabic papers the report of the official news agency, Petra, of a press conference given by a visiting political figure even if reporters of the local papers had attended the same press conference.

The Jordan Times broke out of the mould and started carrying its own stories and analyses of the implications of what was said and even tackled and questioned the context in which the statements were made. And that is what started making all the difference.

Suddenly people, regular newspaper readers in particular, started to realise that if they wanted the real facts then they might be better off reading the Jordan Times.

This might sound like too much praise for the newspaper, but it happens to be a fact and the reality.

The paper has not looked back since then, and went on pushing the so-called borderline in print media reporting in Jordan, which at that time was going through a maze of political

developments including the failed 1985-86 attempt between the Kingdom and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to achieve political coordination in the effort for peace.

As such it was no surprise that the Jordan Times was the most rebellious among the local papers when the government took control of all local newspaper establishments in 1988. Reprimands and warnings to stay away from "sensitive" issues became a way of life for the staff at the Jordan Times, but they did not give up.

A Ministry of Information decision to impose a JD 1,000 fine on the newspaper for carrying two reports about an impending cabinet change and giving the names (which turned out to be almost 100 per cent accurate) of the line-up of ministers was typical of the bold approach the paper adopted (the punitive measure for carrying the reports, which broke new ground in touching the taboo topic of government changes, was shelved subsequently with no explanation).

The Jordan Times swung back into stronger action immediately after the government decision to return the ownership of the local dailies to the private sector.

It was then that George Hawatmeh, who had left the helm of the newspaper in 1988, came back with strength to pick up where he had left off.

His input of dedication and professionalism made reading the Jordan Times a must for anyone who wanted to know anything about Jordanian political issues and events.

The frank and objective reporting of the Jordan Times made Arab readers need the paper as much as they did the Arabic-language papers.

The Jordan Times proved to be an excellent school for journalism, as is evidenced by the presence of ex-Jordan Times staff at the Royal Palace, the Prime Ministry and international news agencies and reputed Western and American newspapers.

This success, I believe, is partially due to the familial and comradely atmosphere that the staff at the Jordan Times have created for themselves and nurtured over the years. Credit goes to the editors there, Abu Nader, Anand, Samir, Ara, Ica, Ayman and Jenny.

The main input into this atmosphere has come from Abdullah Hasanat, who has brought the uniqueness of his hometown, Petra, to the Jordan Times.

To be sure, there have been ups and downs at the newspaper, but the central devotion of the Jordan Times to carry news with clarity and objectivity as well as accuracy has not wavered. And there is no reason to believe it would either.

Cultural landmarks and the making of a new craft

By Mohammed Khatib

ON THE 26th of October 1975, the first issue of this relatively young newspaper was published to complement its sister Arabic daily, Al Ra'i.

Observers who have objectively followed the developmental journey of the Jordan Times during the past 20 years cannot but stop to reflect on a number of achievements, or to be more precise, landmarks in the short but rich life of this publication.

At the outset I must say that there is no doubt the mother organisation, the Jordan Press Foundation, has set up a professional working framework for the Jordan Times.

In comparison to the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, the Jordan Times has always enjoyed a wider range of freedom of expression.

Despite the fact that the newspaper has never been a source of great financial profit, the management has always supported it, subsidised it, and stood up for the policies and principles of its staff. Management has endured the rough along with Jordan Times staff during periods where the newspaper was being harassed for being bolder than others in its presentation of news.

I recall, when I was Minister of Information from 1985 to early 1988, that the editorial board had to put up with disparagements and disapproval from official circles, often in the form of intimidating tactics, due to the nature of reports and editorials being published in the Jordan Times.

But it is thanks to these reports and editorials that the Jordan Times came to earn the reputation of being an important and credible source of information for readers.

During the founding stages of the Jordan Times, the management of Al Ra'i relied heavily on a group of young, professional, and highly educated men and women, who worked their way into becoming a cohesive group of journalists with clear objec-

tives to serve journalism as a craft.

Through hard work and perseverance, this group of young professionals was transformed into what I have always described as "a battalion of commandos," a group of spirited fighters for the free and responsible expression of opinions.

The newspaper, I must point out, has finally surpassed the fear and hesitation syndrome, mainly prevalent among reporters who worked for Arabic publications, including Al Ra'i.

I must also admit that the young professional men and women who covered press conferences possessed a high degree of maturity and understanding with regard to the issues that were raised, as well as a clear vision through which they could succinctly present their views and rebuttals.

What distinguished this group, more than anything else, was the fact that they could operate as an integrated unit, supportive of one another and not merely as isolated reporters in search of self-enhancement.

To a large extent, the Jordan Times has also played a significant role in the cultural interaction between the Arab and Western civilisations.

The trend of more and more Arab reporters moving on to work successfully with various foreign press agencies and media organisations signifies a shift in Western dominance over news presentation from our part of the world.

As such, I consider the Jordan Times to be one of our cultural landmarks. It is, in itself, a training institution for the many young people who aspire to be professional journalists. It has already produced a whole generation of reporters who practise journalism objectively and conscientiously.

In the sixties and seventies Jordanians were eager to see a good quality and reliable local newspaper published in English. I am very pleased to say that the Jordan Times has played and continues to play a crucial role in presenting and representing this coun-



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try and its public life to all English-speaking readers here and abroad.

One must not underestimate, however, the role played by the leadership at the Jordan Times which has made it possible for the paper to reach the level of excellence it enjoys today.

The editorial staff at the Jordan Times have earned the respect of all.

With the Jordan Times now enjoying a high degree of credibility among all its readers, it is hoped that the Jordan Press Foundation will continue to support a newspaper that has contributed so significantly towards the closer interpretation of the cultural and political reality of this country and the region.

To the team of professional writers and editors at the Jordan Times I say Mabrouk. They have injected new and young blood into this profession. I also salute the intelligent and responsible leadership at the Jordan Times who have worked relentlessly to provide the newspaper with all the means necessary to keep it strong and flourishing.

Changing with the Times

(Continued from page 1)

The government's occasional anger at something we wrote usually resulted in a few of us being scolded and warned. Then, something very important happened sometime during the early-to-mid-1980s: we learned that if we stuck to the truth, we could not get into deep trouble. If our facts were right, the government might get angry at us for writing something that was perhaps embarrassing, but we would not get jailed or fined or closed down. We learned, in fact, that the truth protects, even if it also sometimes hurts. The years of dialogue with government officials finally paid off.

The state tacitly accepted that we had to be different from the Arabic press in order to be credible, and we tacitly accepted that we would stay within the state's policy guidelines while also trying to reflect the full spectrum of Jordanian truths and opinions.

The other important development was in the field of opinion and commentary. In the early years of the paper, it was seen to be immoral, treasonous and nearly blasphemous to write an opinion that was not totally in conformity with the government's view-

point. With time, though, the state relaxed, and the government mellowed. People in government authority learned that a slightly different opinion than theirs would neither scuttle the Jordanian state nor eternally shame its senior employees.

Today, the Jordan Times is recognised as a credible newspaper that faithfully and routinely reflects the opinion of the Jordanian government, but also reflects the many other opinions that make up Jordanian society. The credibility of the newspaper is not perfect, and our freedom to write is still partly constrained by political and cultural factors that we accept and live with.

Many of the things that we did on our own in the last 20 years are now routinely done by many other newspapers in Jordan. We have come a long way from the days of lead type.

This is a dual tribute to the humane nature of Jordanian culture and to the professional aspirations of many journalists who have worked in the Jordan Times over the years.

The process continues, though, and today, as we make another transition in technology, we also continue to aspire to higher standards of professionalism in the service of the democratic transformation of Jordanian society.

The stuff of history continues apace, and the Jordan Times has always been privileged to play a small part in this very big story.

These are the days of 'spin control'

By Rania Atalla

WRITING A piece for the 20th anniversary issue of the Jordan Times presents a valuable opportunity for those of us who are "graduates" of this not-always-perfect-from-the-outside-yet-very-special-from-the-inside newspaper.

It is an opportunity to share with interested readers rich and diverse experiences which may not have been possible were it not for our humble beginnings as young reporters for the newspaper.

In most countries, and certainly in Jordan, it is becoming increasingly clear that the days of media "blackouts" and controlling the press are over.

So should be the days of rhetoric, long-winded speeches, and spoon-feeding to reporters, columnists and editors what to say and write in their medium.

These are the days of "spin control," where the government attempts to set the political agenda in a sophisticated and credible manner through the media, among other channels.

The contrast between the two approaches is very clear for someone who has been on both sides—that of the media, as a reporter, and of the government as a Washington-based Jordanian government official.

As a reporter for the Jordan Times in the late 1980s, I found myself very much on the receiving end of the news at a time when dealing with the media was still being done very much "the old way."

These days, it is very evident in places like Washington—"working the media" is a profession on its own—that doing things the "new way" is more effective and, in the long term, more rewarding.

Consider the difference between a propaganda spewed by a traditional government official and force-fed to the media and presenting facts and information in a credible and intelligent manner, leaving it up to the journalists themselves to use whatever material or arguments they find convincing.

The existing situation in Jordan could allow for the latter formula to be utilised, particularly since traditionally, the two main Arabic daily newspapers have been considered "friendly" to the establishment, and

since the ideologically-driven opposition papers have relatively little credibility and prestige and can hardly boast of any substantial readership.

The key to this media "game" is access to information on regular basis. By definition, a reporter is constantly looking for information, either to write a news story on the issue of the day, or to be knowledgeable about a subject that may fall within the "beat" she or he covers.

In this context, establishment officials hold a clear advantage in the game of setting the agenda. They are in a position to share the information with the public through the media in a manner slanted to their own advantage.

In Washington, for example, with few exceptions, spokespersons in each of the key departments of the Administration (the State Department, Defence Department and White House) meet on daily basis with reporters irrespective of whether or not they have news to announce for that day.

The daily briefings allow the spokespersons to correct any misperceptions there may be in the press or among the public on a certain issue, or to float new ideas or concepts that serve the interests of the Administration. Thus, the policy priorities of the Administration—whether Democratic or Republican—are outlined and conveyed in a credible, non-propagandistic manner without insulting the intelligence of reporters or the public.

At the risk of bawling sounded too technical, the point to make here is that, according to the "new way" of doing things, the press and the government are not necessarily on the opposite sides of the "divide."

In fact, there should not be a "divide." The relationship can be seen as dialectic and mutually reinforcing, allowing both parties to gain from dealing intelligently with each other.

The Jordan Times, according to my own experience, has firmly believed in this policy and has

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The writer is Director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington, D.C.

By Adam Jones

THE JOKE was told in Hungary during the Communist era about an American who arrives in Budapest and hires an English-speaking guide to show him around the capital. Over coffee, the guide browses one of the local newspapers.

"What's that story about?" the American asks, pointing.

"The headline says, 'Communism in Ruins. Capitalism Clearly Superior,'" the guide tells him.

"What?" In disbelief, the American presses on. "And that one?"

"It says, 'Corruption Rampant Among Top Party Officials.'"

"I don't understand it!" protests the American. "I've heard so much about censorship over here. How on earth can stuff like that get published in a local paper?"

The guide gives a dismissive wave of his hand: "Ach, who speaks Hungarian?"

In the case of the Jordan Times, the question might be asked, less rhetorically: Who speaks English?

The answer tells us much about this newspaper, which over the last two decades has transformed itself from a supposedly government publicity sheet aimed mainly at foreigners to a Jordanian institution with a lively, authoritative style all its own.

The circulation of the Jordan Times has never strayed above several thousand except over the last two years. But the paper has tripled in size since its inception in 1975—from four to 12 pages.

And it has maintained a core readership, Jordanian and foreign alike, that values the Jordan Times for its comparatively high degree of professionalism; its unparalleled international coverage (better than any newspaper in Canada, in my opinion); and, last but not least, the staunchly liberal values it advances.

"Most of our readers, I think, are Jordanians," says editorial-page editor Ayman Al Safadi. "But the people here who are able and willing to read an English-language newspaper are the educated elite: decision-makers. Our audience is people who are in touch with what's going on. They have access to other sources of information, and there-

fore you've got to be selective in the kind of material you present to them."

In other words, shallowness and propaganda will not wash.

Many critics assume that the Jordan Times' status as Jordan's only English-language daily gives it greater leeway to investigate or criticise the powers-that-be than the mass-circulation Arabic dailies. This, though, is a two-edged sword. Says Ayman Al Safadi: "Sometimes we come under a lot of fire for publishing things that make people say, 'Why are you exposing our dirty laundry to foreigners?' People, including government officials, know that the Jordan Times is read by embassies, researchers who come and work in Jordan, and so on. They get very sensitive when you report on things that they think we've got to keep hidden."

In the paper's early years, when foreigners were the primary audience, these sensitivities led to strict government vigilance. The Times dutifully toed the official line.

But the paper was chafing at the bit. In the 1980s, the Jordan Times began to move out from under government tutelage, and to reorient itself away from the foreign community and towards the English-speaking professional class in Jordan itself.

As the '80s progressed, though, meeting readers' demands for liberal, professional journalism in Jordan became an exercise even more fraught with complexities and contradictions.

The Jordanian economy entered a period of deep crisis. The infitadah erupted on the other side of the Jordan River, exacerbating tensions even in Jordan itself.

Still, it came as a shock when in August 1988, the government at the time—not content with its broadcasting monopoly and the controlling interest it held in all the daily papers—cracked down severely on press freedom in Jordan.

Editors and boards of directors were fired and replaced. Censors were installed in the newsrooms. Journalism with any pretence of independence had become an endangered species.

The anti-government riots in Ma'an and elsewhere in April of the following year were the solvent that began to erode the grip of govern-

ment on the press and national life as a whole.

But the resulting political liberalisation brought two new parliaments (in 1989 and 1993), and a succession of governments, whose tolerance for political opposition and press criticism was far from assured.

The first post-election government quickly abandoned the 1988 measures against the press. Newspapers were returned to their old boards of directors, and prior censorship was lifted. But the first attempt in two decades to draft a media law—the Press and Publication Law of 1993—was a harsh setback for the Jordan Times and other media outlets.

Nor have more recent developments necessarily favoured the press. The tense period following normalisation of relations with Israel finds the officialdom suddenly less tolerant of domestic opposition.

Indeed, given the present attitudes towards Jordanian newspapers, many journalists are convinced that "while this might not be the best Press and Publications Law, to revise it today would be a turn for the worse," according to George Hawatmeh, the Editor-in-Chief of the Jordan Times.

Long years of official-mouthpiece status, together with restrictive legislation like the Press and Publications Law of 1993, ensure that entire areas, along with whole sectors of government activity, remain virtually no-go zones for all of Jordan's daily papers.

Jordan Times coverage of the Hashemite Royal Family, for example, is by turns respectful, adulatory, or downright saccharine. ("You think we sugar-coat everything we say about the Royal family," George Hawatmeh protests. "But I get complaints all the time that we're not even fair to them.")

The hazards of covering the royals was amply demonstrated in 1992, when the Jordan Times' superb columnist and former editor-in-chief, Rami Khouri, dared to speculate on a post-King Hussein Jordan after the monarch's return from surgery overseas.

Letters of protest flooded in: a programme Mr. Khouri hosted on state-owned Jordan TV was axed. "We still somehow suffer from the reverberations of

that particular article," says George Hawatmeh. "But it was a very democratic exercise. The newspaper benefited from it in the way of experience, of response, of provoking thought among Jordanians."

Criticism of the security forces is another taboo area for the Jordan Times. Mr. Hawatmeh and a former Jordan Times reporter, Sana Abdallah, are still awaiting a Supreme Court ruling on their convictions for "disparaging the security apparatus."

The Jordan Times had reported testimony by defendants in a 1993 trial who claimed they had been tortured in prison and coerced into signing fake confessions.

"The fact that they've taken us to court over that is outrageous," Mr. Hawatmeh says. The Supreme Court ruling will be "a very important test of the way people (in Jordan) understand the press and its function."

But normally the paper is more circumspect when reporting on security matters. The shooting death of an outspoken critic of the regime, Mahmoud Khalifeh, and the wounding of his brother, in a police raid in early June was the talk of Amman for weeks. But it received barely a mention in the Jordan Times (or any other Jordanian daily) until the matter was brought up in Parliament more than two months later. Then it could be reported—as parliamentary proceedings.

"Nobody told us not to publish" the Khalifeh story, George Hawatmeh emphasised to me. "But you needed a statement, at least, by official sources as to what happened. How could you tackle such a sensitive story from only one side, or on the basis of what you hear on the street or what's said in the tabloids?"

But doesn't that give the government a great deal of power? I asked Mr. Hawatmeh. Isn't it censorship if they can kill a story simply by refusing comment on it?

"According to the Press and Publications Law, if you say anything that might be conceived as against the security forces, you could be jailed for up to two years," he responded. "I can take a chance, but I'd be liable to prosecution. And the story in its own right was so sensitive that it could have created problems much bigger than me."

Adam Jones is a Ph.D. student at the University of British Columbia and an instructor at Langara College, both in Vancouver, Canada. He spent two months in Amman earlier this year studying the Jordan Times and the wide process of political liberalisation in Jordan.

Self-censorship:

A mastered art despite winds of change

By Waleed M. Sa'di

THERE IS nothing more noble or challenging than sharing one's views with a receptive public. So when the occasion presented itself in 1987, I immediately jumped at the opportunity.

This came about when George Hawatmeh, the chief editor at the time, accepted that I contribute a weekly column to the Jordan Times on the basis of my diplomatic and academic experiences. I had just concluded a tour of duty as ambassador to Ankara and was deeply preoccupied by U.N. human rights activities.

Whether rightly or not, I felt quite opinionated on many international issues then as now.

Earlier on I had served as Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva having started my diplomatic career in New York where I served as deputy permanent representative to the United Nations Headquarters.

I think this international work, over and above my education in law at the University of Chicago, had provided me with an international perspective that I wanted so much to share with Jordanian readers.

I still recollect that I was not so good at this craft.

It took me a while to catch on and many people still think I have a long way to go before I master the trade of journalism! Still I felt quite free during that period to express my thoughts on many different subjects of local and international dimensions.

On rare occasions my writings were rejected as too controversial for local taste, be that political or social. Soon enough I started feeling the burden of censorship and so I learned to present my views doctored enough to satisfy the local scene. I soon felt at ease with self-censorship.

It took me a while to adjust but after a few brushes with my superiors, I succeeded in arriving at a happy medium



Dr. Sa'di is a columnist and editorial writer at the Jordan Times

between what I wanted to say and what was acceptable for publication.

The challenge grew bigger when Rami Khouri, the Chief Editor of the paper in 1988, suddenly left his post over a controversy on certain policy issues related to the paper.

This abrupt turn of events put me as a front-runner for the post of chief editor which I assumed for a little more than a year. That period was critical since it preceded the era of democracy which was ushered in with much fanfare. I was immediately labelled as an editor who belonged to the pre-democracy days or to the era when democracy was in hibernation.

Many people, including a number of the newspaper's staff, thought I was an agent of the government smuggled in editor's shoes to take further control of the newspaper.

I must admit that some of my decisions were tainted by my efforts to toe the official line but I nevertheless maintained enough liberty to write freely on many subjects. I wrote all the editorials during that period and they were written with a considerable dose of freedom.

The era of democracy in 1989 brought in many changes in the mass media and all of us who were associated with the era before that were immediately targeted and transformed into scapegoats.

All chief editors of the dailies were literally fired and replaced by others who were more closely associated with parliamentary democracy.

Luckily for me, though, I was asked to stay on the newspaper staff as a weekly columnist and editorial writer, which is where I remain today.

Do I see or detect any changes between the past and present? Well, yes and no is the best answer that I can come up with. I still feel I have to struggle between what I want to say and what should not be published. But that is an art I can now master quite well.

The coming of age for the Times

By Elia Nasrallah

BORN ON Oct. 26, 1975, Jordan's only English-language daily newspaper has seen growth and development, its readership expanding beyond the aspirations even of its publishers.

As a member of the Jordan Times staff for the past 18 years, I can say that we have come a long way, undaunted by the many difficulties that we faced at the beginning in terms of space, poor equipment and limited sources of information.

Working under constant pressure—the nature is in the journalistic profession—staff share a common concern in their endeavours to cope with political developments and cover the widest range of other topics: cultural, social and economic, reflecting in the process aspects of life in Jordan on the one hand, and its image to the outside world, on the other.

Looking back over the past years, I vividly recall the hardships my colleagues and I had to go through, starting with the time when we were crammed into a tiny office in the same dilapidated building that housed our sister Al Ra'i newspaper, struggling with poor facilities and old-fashioned typewriters.

Sometimes, and like all other newspapers, trivial errors and less often, serious mistakes inadvertently occurred.

The reasons for these are generally attributable to the pressure of work that extended late into the night.

Reflecting back on the office environment at the time, I remember that there were not enough chairs and tables for all the staff, and how staff members used to wait for their colleagues to leave in order to find a seat and start work.

These were the days when chairs used to be borrowed from colleagues



Elia Nasrallah, better known as Abu Nader, has been with the Jordan Times for 18 years and is now head of the translation department

"next door" in Al Ra'i, or when staff members used to chain their chairs to the iron legs of tables after working hours so that they could find them the next day.

Even parking your car was a problem in those days. Being located on the main highway to the University of Jordan, cars were exposed to numerous accidents by passing vehicles.

In the early eighties our offices moved to another location: a small building up the Jordan University Road, some 300 metres away from Al Ra'i building.

Trudging along the road, shutting between the two buildings under the rain or sun to carry print material to the press in the old building or bring in news print paper from the teleprinters and other requirements for work, our messengers—some of whom are still with us today—often dropped some of the paper sheets on the way; news that was irretrievably blown away by the wind.

Of course in those days we had no fax machines for the prompt receipt of articles and news and we had to rely on the teleprinters and messengers at all hours.

In the late eighties, we moved back, this time to newly built offices in the Al Ra'i compound, where we remain until the present.

The difference between 1975 and 1995 is quite striking, not only in terms of space and modern facilities for the newspaper, but also in terms of the paper's improvement in quality, presentation, variety of subjects, the size of the newspaper itself, the readership and advertising.

We can proudly say that every page is the fruit of tremendous efforts produced jointly by the editors, reporters, translators, typesetters, montagists and other unknown soldiers.

Indeed, there is no limit for improvement, an aspect of our lives which we regard as a continuous process.

(Continued on page IV)

LETTERS FROM
OUR CONTRIBUTORSA newspaper
'without fear
or favour'

By Godfrey Jansen

LOOKING BACK over my 30 years as a journalist, I have been extremely lucky that I have worked only for or contributed to publications that were—and are—

independent. Among them the Jordan Times. By independent, I mean a publication that expresses its opinion uninfluenced by one group or party or sectional interest and publishes straightforward journalism "without fear or favour."

The first in my diary of newspapers was The Statesman of New Delhi and Calcutta for which I served for 10 years as "West Asia Correspondent."

The great strength of The Statesman was that, as an English language paper in India—and British owned and edited—it did not have to curry favour with anybody or group or promote any ideology.

The owners of the paper, unfortunately, did not see this as a source of strength but instead felt it was an anomaly in an independent India and so it passed to Indian ownership and control.

Not long after this happened the editor suggested that my reporting could and should be more "objective" on the Palestine issue.

I replied that I could not be "objective" between right (the Arabs) and wrong (Israel). Not surprisingly, we parted company not long after.

The Statesman, I am almost happy to say, has paid the price of its loss of independence and has shrunk greatly in circulation and influence.

After leaving The Statesman, I was for 18 years the "Levant Correspondent" of The Economist where there were no restrictions on the independence of what I wrote although there was, at times, some strain over the paper's then distinct bias towards Israel—an orientation which has now changed completely.

But after I retired I had a somewhat similar experience with a second Indian paper because, in general, the Indian press is strongly pro-Israel.

So I am now doubly lucky to write for one of the Indian dailies that takes the old Gandhi-Nehru line which is, if anything, anti-Israeli. This is The Deccan Herald of Bangalore, which happens to be my hometown.

I began writing for the Jordan Times several years ago because George (Hawatmeb) asked me to contribute. I saw the "Times," like The Statesman as an English language publication in a non-English mother-tongue country, a fact which cannot but produce a certain distancing effect that makes editorial independence much easier.

Long may the Jordan Times independence continue, especially in this region of the world where independence in anything, let alone the press, is a rare and precious commodity indeed.

Keeping track
of regional events

By Michael Jansen

I MUST be counted among those who have been readers of the Jordan Times for its 20 years of publication. I have been visiting Jordan for more than those 20 years and cannot remember the days where there was no "Times" served up in the mornings; so it is clear that the paper has become part of my daily routine when in Amman.

The Jordan Times is a very special newspaper because it is both a local daily reporting on events in the Kingdom and a paper which covers the entire Arab region. And it does not do too badly with the rest of the world either.

I think I can safely say that there are few papers in the world which give their readers more news and views to the column inch. Mind-boggling at times.

Reading the Times, posted to me in Cyprus where it arrives erratically and often very belatedly, helps me to function as a Middle East correspondent for The Irish Times of Dublin, a paper I also greatly admire for its serious and extensive coverage of foreign news, and particularly of developments in this region.

But then the Irish have a longstanding connection with the Arab World. Indeed, it has been said that they are the "Arabs of Europe," a people as proud as the Arabs with their own distinctive culture and singularity of character.

The fact that I still read issues of the Jordan Times when they arrive weeks, or even months, late, shows that its reporting serves as excellent background to current happenings.

In addition to reports on politics and commentaries, I find the financial pages very useful for keeping track of economic developments in Jordan, Palestine and the Gulf.

For all of these reasons I feel particularly honoured to occasionally contribute to the Jordan Times, in my opinion, the best of the English-language papers produced in the Arab World.

'Democracy means more than free speech'

By Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber

IN WRITING to extend my congratulations to the Jordan Times on its 20th anniversary, I could think of no issue more relevant to write about than that of democracy.

Over the past two decades the Jordan Times has developed into one of the best English-language newspapers in the developing world. This development has been part of the progressive process of democratisation in the country.

While we in Jordan continue on our path towards democratisation, we would do well to consider carefully what democracy really involves and what responsibilities it entails for all of us. What qualities must we cultivate in ourselves to nurture and encourage its full development?

Democracy is more than the granting of free speech or even tolerance towards others' people's opinions and ideas; democracy is a way of life.

Manure democracy is an integral part of a complete circle of life, affecting the basis of how we deal with each other in our private and official lives. Democracy relies on discipline within an orderly and ordered social system.

The discussion of these philosophical underpinnings of democracy is a reminder that liberty is not a "license" but an emancipation of minds left to reason their ways through to rational solutions of daily problems.

It is also a reminder that equality essentially means no more than the opening up of windows of opportunity for every human being to develop to his/her full potential in an institutionalised and structured social order.



Dr. Abu Jaber is a member of the Upper House of Parliament and former minister of foreign affairs

In this way, the very important ingredient and link between democracy and meritocracy arises.

Historically speaking, democracy is an old concept, dating back to the ancient Athenian state of the Fifth Century B.C. For the ancient Greeks, however, the enjoyment of democratic privilege was confined to a select few: Greek citizens only; it did not extend to all classes, and did not include either slaves or foreigners. Underlying this narrow status of democracy was the belief that, after all, few people were interested in, qualified for, or had the time to rationally contemplate public life.

Modern democracies, however, since the Age of Enlightenment, developed the idea that every man, and later woman, is rational enough to participate in public life and thus can elect and be elected to public office.

While the latter concept

has not yet been settled historically, both the ancient Greek definition of democracy and the modern concept of democracy rest on a belief in the individual and on her/his ability to reason on their preferred approach to life.

While ancient Greek thought antedated 'organised' monotheism, much of the thought of the Age of Enlightenment was, in essence, an attempt to be free of monotheism, to confine it to neutralise it or worse still, reject it altogether.

Rousseau screamed: "Man was born free yet everywhere he is in chains." Thomas Jefferson, one of the fathers of the American Revolution, believed that all men were endowed by their creator with the faculty to rule and be ruled.

"Who chained man?" is a question that has been debated for a long time and which will continue to be so for a long time to come.

One dubious answer came

from Karl Marx who regarded the economic factor as the most important ingredient in the achievement of justice; yet, whether one speaks of Aristotle, Al Farabi, Rousseau or Marx, the search has always revolved around the rationality of humans to manage their own affairs.

Translated politically, rationality means that no single individual can monopolise decision-making in public life. No single individual can claim the divine inspiration or the right to do so. Society cannot, indeed must not, rest on the opinion of one individual.

Society must organise itself into institutions of unlimited duration, where rational decisions are reached through the debate and selection of the common good for all.

Politically, this means an elected committee, assembly, legislature, parliament, diet, bundestag, etc. Here, decisions are taken collectively, by a majority, in

accordance with reason. Belief, while venerated and valued, however, becomes a private matter.

The development of civic society based on the concepts of pluralism and human rights requires resort to rational institutionalisation. It should be remembered that Jordan has, since its establishment in 1921, attempted to institutionalise its liberal atmosphere.

In reviewing the country's halting constitutional development over the past seven decades, one should keep in mind that it has been in the process of transition, on the one hand, while always remaining in the eye of the Middle East crisis, on the other.

It is the twin challenge of internal development and its concomitant dislocations: the external threat and the regional atmosphere, that account for this condition. Now that we are on the threshold of a new era of peace, the possibilities of a maturing democratisation within the developmental process of civil society are immensely better.

One should also keep in mind that while Jordanians have enjoyed political freedoms and free expression more than any other people in the region, genuine institutionalisation did not begin until the late 1980s. The record of parliament since that date clearly points out that an indigenous legislative system was in the making.

One of the most salient features of a liberal democratic system is not only its resolution of conflict and accommodation of contrary views in a peaceful manner, but the fact that such a system is, of necessity, both time-consuming and cumbersome.

It takes time to reach a

well studied solution by any legislature. The legislature is, after all, accountable to voters and has to abide by the mandate given to it by voters. And while it assists in the development of laws and passes them, it must, above all, abide by the rules of the game. It is only thus that democracy can function properly.

Democracy is educational. Perhaps one of the most important functions of parliament, in addition to the legislation and supervision of government activities, is its educational function. Once again education aims at the development of human reason so that individuals can depend on themselves to find solutions to their problems. This places on the individual the responsibility of being personally accountable for her/his own thoughts and actions. This inner direction takes a great deal of courage, rendering true the statement that one has to be brave to be free.

The onus of responsibility then lies on the government to provide the developmental space for the individual and the group as well as to honour merit, not wealth, social status nor patronage, in filling positions in the state. Democracy is resort to reason in political life while meritocracy is the rational path to an equitable socio-economic order.

When the disparity between wealth and poverty became extreme and when positions of the state became the legacy of the wealthy only, democracy can become severely disabled. Democracy relies on balance.

From talking straight to playing it right

By Dr. Marwan Muasher

WHEN I was asked to write an article on the occasion of the Jordan Times' 20th anniversary, I could not believe how quickly time had elapsed over the last 10 years.

In 1985, having started a job in government at the Ministry of Planning only a month earlier, I wrote a similar article titled "Romancing Its (The Jordan Times) 10th Anniversary".

The paper carried then, believe it or not, the date: October 26, 1985. Who would have known then what was in store for the country, the Jordan Times, or me? I certainly had no idea. Nine years to the date, we signed a peace treaty with Israel, and today, I am writing this article out of Tel Aviv.

Ten years ago, I wrote about the people of the Jordan Times. It is surprising how many have left, and even more amazing to note how many have stayed.

Of the people I wrote about then, George Hawatmeb, Abdullah Hasanat, P.V. Vivekanand, Ara Voskian, Elia Nasrallah 'Abu Nader', and Samir Ghawi are still there. They represent the commitment to hard work and excellence that we have come to expect from the Jordan Times.

Despite the considerable change in both physical conditions and management pragmatics, the young and dynamic atmosphere, thanks to these people, has remained.

The Jordan Times has only aged in time, but certainly not in spirit. Every time I walk into the paper's building, I immediately feel at home, without much thinking that I owe this wonderful feeling to these people.

I am, of course, no longer a columnist for the paper, and although I never held a full-time job at the Jordan Times, I miss my days there, when I was able to express my opinion candidly.

Diplomacy has its way of half-murdering one's thoughts. I hope one day to be able to return to writing and to expressing much of what I would like to say.

When I took up writing for the Jordan Times in 1982, I was largely concerned

with social issues. Around 1985, my columns "Talking Straight" took a turn towards politics. I became interested in parliament, democracy, government, and systems of checks and balances.

I also developed the habit of having a series of interesting encounters with several ministers of information.

The first was in 1986 when the minister of information called me to check whether I was fit to be the prime minister's spokesman.

I was not interested at the time, and he was not exactly impressed with me either. My first brush with entering the world of politics ended with no results.

By brief infatuation with politics came to a halt on Aug. 13, 1988, when I wrote an article which upset the government at the time.

As a government employee, I was told I could not write without the cabinet's approval.

After a four-month "rest", I was called back to that office, where another minister gave me a piece of his mind as to how harmful my article was, how many Muashers he could count on as his friends, and how he certainly had no objections to giving me a permit to write, all in the same breath.

That was in December 1988. For a whole year after that, I did not resume my column. The experience left me too demoralised and frustrated to write.

Four months later, I was asked by another prime minister to be his press advisor.

This time, I accepted. That same office of the minister of information witnessed several attempts by myself to coordinate with an obviously disgruntled and unwilling minister.

I stayed in that job for six months, and left with the departure of the prime minister. I went back to writing shortly after, with my four final articles published between Feb. 8 and March 15, 1990.

A fourth minister of information called me to the same office to appoint me as director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington, D.C., a job I assumed on

April 1, 1990, without a hint as to how it would change my career.

I wrote in an era when publishing an article that merely expressed criticism against the government was considered an act of courage, regardless of the professional credibility or journalistic value of that article.

Today, such articles abound in the local press, but still with little attention given to credibility or value. The greatest credit to the Jordan Times, I think, is that throughout this period, pre- and post- 1989 alike, it has kept the same standard, covering news and providing commentaries with boldness, but not sensationalism, with professionalism, but not mediocrity.

In 1995 as in 1985 or 1975, the Jordan Times is still the address to go to in Jordan for credible journalism.

Of the numerous friends I have today, many seem to be connected in some way to the Jordan Times.

Rami Khouri, who still writes a column for the paper, is today a dear friend whose opinion and advice I regularly seek.

I still visit George Hawatmeb at his office every chance I get for a stimulating conversation on the issues of the day. His commitment to the paper is exemplary, at a time when so many have left.

No visit to the Jordan Times is complete without a chat with Abdullah Hasanat, whom I still feel very close to although I do not see often.

I was fortunate to work with and meet Jenny Hamarneh for the first time in Madrid when she was a part of a team dispatched at the last minute to help me with the Jordanian press centre at the peace conference in 1991. She has a wonderful spirit, and we've been friends ever since.

Nermeen Murad and Sana Abdallah, old-time friends, shared with me some difficult



Dr. Muasher is Jordan's ambassador to Israel

times during the final rounds of negotiations leading to the peace treaty.

My son Omar and I both gained a new friend in Ayman Safadi, who always has a fresh perspective and who competes with Ica Wabbeh in telling the newest joke.

In 1987, I met a young reporter at the Jordan Times by the name of Rania Atalla. Since then, we developed both a very close working relationship and a strong friendship as colleagues at the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington. Rania taught me much of what I know, not only about the profession, but also about professionalism. She is a credit to Jordan.

Senator Laila Sharaf once told me that she called AUB (American University of Beirut) graduates a "super race". Indeed, at least until the civil war in Beirut, AUB graduates developed a reputation in Jordan as being well-rounded, hard-working, intelligent and forward-looking.

In some ways, the Jordan Times has managed to develop the same reputation of "graduating" a super race. It continues to provide to many, myself included, a home.

To the institution and its people, I raise my hat.

Liberal journalism, Jordanian Style

Continued from page III

the march to realise what is their birthright," a 1993 editorial avowed. "No matter how brutal, backward or entrenched the regimes are, people will triumph. Authorities must realise that they cannot rule by intimidation, torture and abuse of human rights." Even abuses within Jordan are discussed if an outside agency reports them—as in Sana Abdallah's 1994 feature article, head-

lined, "Amnesty gives a mixed review of Jordan's record."

How far does this liberal approach extend into the Times' newsroom itself? The atmosphere in the newsroom is informal to say the least, but staff members sometimes complain of feeling frozen out of the chain of command. "Our input isn't solicited, we're not brought into the decision-making process, we never have staff meetings, and we get really little feedback about what we're writing," one reporter told me.

Over the decades, the Jordanian press grew used to poor salaries, ramshackle infrastructure, a sycophantic relationship with the holders of power—and a conservative social climate that emphasised political stability and tribal solidarity over vigorous and independent journalism.

"This is a paternalistic culture," says Ayman Al Safadi. "People for so long have accepted the fact that they're given the information that their elders

give them—their fathers, their politicians. You don't have this aggressive nature to go and seek information. Of course, any government in the world likes to conduct its business behind closed doors; it doesn't like to deal with the headache of having to work publicly. And the culture has served that purpose here." The culture also makes sources, official or otherwise, reluctant to speak to reporters.

"People here are scared of the ramifications of whatever they say," a Jordan Times reporter told me. "Even if they weren't afraid, this is a new thing for them. They're not used to being

able to just speak their mind. So it's hard to get people to open up. They will talk, but generally they'll tell you the bare minimum." Investigative journalism is correspondingly more difficult than elsewhere, and a chronic lack of funds and resources does not help matters.

The Jordan Times' finances are strictly controlled by the Jordan Press Foundation, which concentrates on the company's Arabic-language flagship, Al Rai. Only the crumbs get passed along to Al Rai's much smaller English-language counterpart. Result: until this year, the Jordan Times had just one

computer in the newsroom.

"What we get, we have to fight for," George Hawatmeb admits. "We're the smaller brother (in the JPF family). We have to push and shove to get things done. Today, the situation's better, but it's by no means perfect." (On the bright side, the Jordan Times made its first-ever profit in 1994—about JD 80,000—and so has outgrown its reputation as a cash drain on its larger sibling). Resource constraints also prevent the paper from hiring typesetters and proofreaders who are fully fluent in English. The Jordan Times' columns are still a

minefield of typographical errors. My favourite was the story claiming that tennis star Monica Seles was "staged in Hamburg" by a knife-wielding spectator. Occasional amusement aside, though, the errors can only be dispiriting for writers and readers alike. The struggle to make ends meet means that most Jordan Times reporters wear at least two hats—doing better-paid work for foreign news agencies, for example. That limits the time they can devote to the paper. The paper has enormous difficulty holding on to the reporters it trains. They are constantly

being lured away by other, wealthier media, and by government institutions. Raw cuttings are brought in to replace them.

Before they move on, though, the new recruits will learn the craft. And like their many prominent predecessors, they will leave their stamp on a newspaper that has become perhaps the most respected in the country.

The Jordan Times' success derives from the shared vision of those who have shaped and produced the newspaper, day after day for two decades—and counting.

Twenty years on, editor recalls the first weeks

IN 1975, Ma'az D. Shukayr was working as director of programmes for Radio Jordan. In August that year, he was approached by the director of the Jordan Press Foundation, the late Jumma'a Hamad, to take over as 'launching' editor of the impending Jordan Times.

Though Mr. Shukayr says he agreed to supervise the launching of the newspaper only during its first six weeks, he was to return later, this time as the newspaper's managing editor for three and a half years (1979-1982).

At that early point it was already established that the Jordan Times would stand against providing "protocol" news, as Mr. Shukayr puts it.

These were Crown Prince Hassan's directives, he says, and quotes himself as telling Prince Hassan at the time: "If you want to read news Al Ra'i style, we'll recruit translators. If you want to read real news, we'll recruit journalists."

Mr. Shukayr can list the names of reporters and columnists whose names are now highly familiar in their capacities as well-established columnists or otherwise, and whose bylines were first seen in the Jordan Times.

But the most significant first issue "coup" for the Jordan Times was landing Prince Hassan's first interview with the local press, says Mr. Shukayr, who became the first local journalist to have interviewed the Prince.

Mr. Shukayr quotes the then prime minister, the late Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf, as having said: "In the morning I look at the Jordan Times to know what is actually going on. Then I look at the Arab press to read 'protocol' news."

As the country's only English-language daily, and "probably the region's best," Mr. Shukayr says, the newspaper received a great deal of support from Prince Hassan as well as the government at the time.

"They accepted our formula for presenting news the way we chose to."

Flicking through the pages of the Jordan Times today, he explains that news of general interest such as sports and culture are rarely covered.

"Many areas are not covered in proportion to their importance, such as local sports; others are over-exposed, such as international news and the editorial content, still others are irrelevant such as the entire Weekend, with the exception of



Mr. Shukayr now owns and manages Arab Multi-Media, a company offering translation, publication, conference and journalistic services.

an occasionally good 'Society on the Move' column," he says.

But Mr. Shukayr is aware of the problems. The past was a good lesson to learn from.

In 1975, he explains, local English-language journalists were a rare commodity.

"Those who qualified (simply because they mastered the English language) and accepted work for the little pay we could afford, left us for better paying jobs."

The solution, says Mr. Shukayr, was to resort to employing foreign women who were residing here.

"The Jordan Press Foundation is making a very big mistake (by not paying local staff high salaries), he maintains.

"The ultimate objectives of a well-balanced and reliable newspaper require that an integrated team of well-paid full-time reporters... be hired."

Sad facts that a newspaper which formerly trained and qualified its reporters to move ahead and find employment in international press agencies can no longer bear the financial burden of employing full-time local staff reporters, he says.

"This does not mean that we succeeded. But we hope that you will."

Between the devil and the deep blue sea 'Managing editors who prefer to jump'

By Abdullah Hasanat

AT THEIR best, managing editors are like crown princes. They have to real power, but everyone expects them to possess it.

Journalism, as it is known and practised today, is an altogether Western vocation, as in fact, is the post of a managing editor.

The job, to my mind, is to manage incoming information as well as that which the newspaper publishes. On top of that, the job entails coordinating work among editorial staff members.

In the Jordan Times, the sky is the limit as to what the managing editor can do. Let me be frank and honest with you. My function also includes public relations, supervising maintenance, photocopying, operating the fax machine, and ensuring cleanliness of the place as well. Awesome, though no flatterer tasks.

These tasks, at a big organisation like the Jordan Press Foundation, our mother company, which also owns Al Ra'i, should be done through office automation and by hiring the appropriate personnel, you might think.

Not so I am afraid. The Jordan Times does not make money—not much anyway.

Last year and for the first time in our history, we made a profit, albeit a very small one, compared to our Arabic sister, Al Ra'i.

Should we then expect more from the money providers?

Should Al Ra'i continue to subsidise us? Should they help us employ a business manager who would solicit more advertisements, and invest in our attempts to widen the circulation of the Times?

Should the company use Al Ra'i money, as the management like to put it, to employ people who would operate our photocopying and fax machines? Or at least buy us a new facsimile to replace our old machine, which instead of taking one sheet of paper at a time, gobbles the whole lot in one go and makes the

life of the operator (in this case me) so miserable?

Should management invest more in computers? The tickers that ooze out the wire stories are illegibly printed. Either the print is in extremely faint ink, or the bottom half of the words are not visible. Those of us who have been here long enough know what the saying "A sight for sore eyes" only too well.

Should they invest in a new photocopying machine?

Not that the management is the only source of bother to a managing editor. Journalists are a nightmare. Ours, I can tell you, expect their managing editors to provide all these services and more.

If the computer printer runs out of paper our staff expect someone, no matter whether it is me or otherwise, to come running up with the new pack. When the roll of the fax machine runs out and the machine starts beeping, journalists in the newsroom suddenly stop their chattering to inform the managing editor of the disturbing noises emitted by the said machine.

Not only that. The managing editor's job is to provide them with names, dates, telephone numbers and background of events for the benefit of journalists who know nothing about compiling their own fact sheets, and who have probably never seen a two-line telephone set and electronic address book in their lives.

In anger they refer to the managing editor in Arabic as "you" but in the third person plural, meaning you, your boss—the chief editor—your boss's bosses, their bosses, government, king, God.

There is of course the almighty chief editor, who, like a spiritual power, is aware of all the shortcomings, but who, like all chiefs, is fond of perfection and who, unlike the spiritual power, does not take for granted the limitations of human beings.

Whenever he appears in



Abdullah is Managing Editor

the newsroom brandishing a newspaper in his hand, the atmosphere turns tense. He does not take no for an answer. He wants a perfect, spell-free, all-government encompassing, up-to-date, history-filled newspaper.

And without pointing his finger at the actual person of the managing editor, ensures that while his rage reaches every ear, all eyes will inevitably turn in blame on that poor man sitting in the corner who is just below him in rank.

Well, perhaps the way I describe the situation here at the Jordan Times is somewhat exaggerated. The newspaper has definitely come a long way from the days it was produced from a tiny, poorly equipped room to the spacious and reasonably equipped newsroom of today.

Although we do crave for more in terms of equipment, furniture, facilities and staff, we could not have reached what we are today without the support of the management.

We have made many mistakes over the years. Mistakes that have been regretfully offensive to some. On these occasions it was

the chief editor George Hawatmeh, and to some extent the chairman of the board, Mahmoud Kayed, who shielded us and who took it upon themselves to carry the blame.

Admittedly, we do tend to nag heavily around here. I like to call it, more often than not, "constructive nagging" since it really is due to the sincere efforts of the chief editor and staff to ensure the production of a high quality paper, one with an insoluble reputation, that all this intolerable but "constructive" nagging goes on.

We are aware though that being the morals we are, we cannot operate in a vacuum. Limitations that impede our work are the product of circumstances we are often helpless to change.

If the management cannot provide essential needs for the staff and their working environment, that is because at the end of the year, it has to justify its expenditures to its shareholders, who, while concerned with quality journalism, are mostly interested in profit.

And while one is expected to produce a quality, flawless publication at the

end of the day, it is quite short-sighted to presume that quality work can be achieved without spending on work equipment and on ensuring its proper and smooth operation as well as on keeping employees productively comfortable within their work environment.

Being the difficult and odd species they are, it goes without saying that journalists and reporters are a demanding lot. But their demands are often legitimate. They are after information, which in most cases, is not easy to obtain. They also want the means to process that information and ready it for publication in the most appropriate form.

Should we, managing editors, then continue to complain? Perhaps not. What we need is to endure, if not by our own built-in strengths and aging wisdom, then by a will to survive in a world that always sandwiches us between the outgoing old with their ancient ways and modes and the upcoming young with their zeal and impatience.

Should we succumb to the squeezing? Not as long as we can hold on to our guns.

Errors are 'normal'... Ask editors about them

By Shehab Makahleh

TO ERR is human. Errors in a daily 12-page newspaper are normal, given the input required by a handful of staff working day and night to put out a quality newspaper.

Mistakes can always be made. Some of them can be overlooked and easily forgiven.

Others, however, particularly if they involve misinterpretation, are likely to cost one his/her job. So far, this has not happened to any of us, and we're not waiting for it, either.

Looking back on these errors, some, now, can seem quite humorous. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, a headline on a page one story read: "Israeli invasion of Kuwait."

One read: "Women have as much right as men to practise democracy in public arenas."

Another that cannot forego mention was a story on American military aid to Jordan which was expected to reach \$50m but was published instead as \$50b.

The best, to my mind, was the story on Jordanian-Palestinian bilateral ties, except it wasn't ties at all, but a typing error that changed these ties to bilateral lies.

Language is a funny thing, when one letter, a tiny horizontal line across a vertical one, is capable of changing meaning so radically.

By Roufan Nabhas

IT HAS been said that proofreading is one of the easiest tasks in producing a newspaper. You merely have to compare typeset articles with their originals for typing and spelling errors and you have done your job.

Well, that's what mostly happens but there is more to it than meets the eye. Mainly, what a proofreader seeks in the lonely world of article comparison is some concentration, smiles from all around, and a good method to dump unclear originals onto another proofreading colleague.

But there's always the unpredictable moods of the editors; along with what to have for lunch that gets in the way of an effective job.

Concentration is a massive demand and strain on anyone. The administration of this newspaper recently knocked down all doors (the policy of one large bappy family). This is good, but what happens to the proofreader who can't concentrate on comparing heavily worded paragraphs? Well, he or she eavesdrops on the best conversation around him.

Then there's the issue of speed. Editors sometimes tell us to proofread quickly (there are deadlines to meet, parties to attend, children to be fed); so we're basically their ticket to a

good social life.

Slowing the pace of proofreading can be practical since it means less errors, but most of the time proofreaders are called on to utilise their skills for catering (buying lunch), entertainment (providing the music) and as chauffeurs (driving reporters to their assignments).

Skills? Who said anything about those? Well, a proofreader's skills are to de-code and decipher and to guess what the editor's notes actually say; make out the fine print on an article and to go for the best bet.

Maybe they meant to call us "proofreaders," but someone misread the original article and added an "r". There are all sorts of writing styles that we are so fortunate to come across: hieroglyphics, languages that resemble ancient Chinese and a marvellous occasional series of children's scribbles.

It's a great job. And we're at the receiving end of everyone's wrath.

Not only that: we have to contend with an uncomfortable load of work to meet deadlines, not to mention the burden we shoulder at the expense of our ever-thickening eyeglasses.

Proofreaders. These unknown soldiers, always in the line of fire.

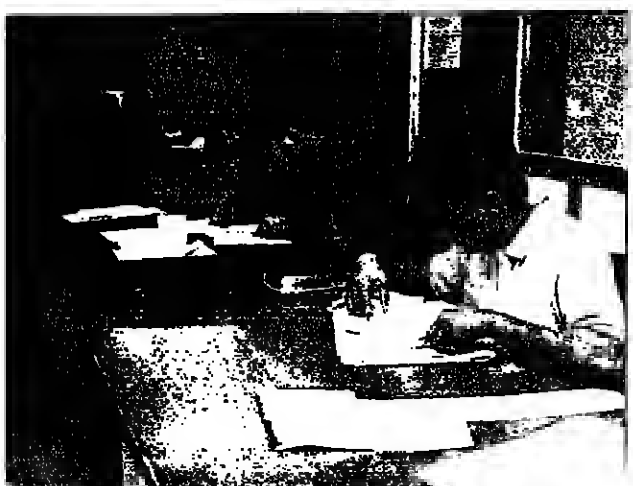


Photo shows proofreaders Tony Purackal, better known as Rajan, and Pradeep Kumar absorbed in their work

Two different kinds of 'honour': crime and protection

By Rana Hussein

NOTHING COULD have prepared me for the cultural shock I was to undergo when I was assigned as a reporter of crime in the Jordan Times Sept. 1993.

The job, I thought, would be exciting and humanitarian and more than that, I was somewhat younger and not so exposed myself to the world of police, officialdom and secrecy; the underworld of the "hush-bush".

The days passed. I was to realise only too soon that there would be difficulties and impossibilities to this job.

So where does the Jordan Times stand on crime-reporting?

The complications within legal procedures related to crimes and accidents are vast. It is always difficult to gather the substantial facts that need to go into a report on crime and accidents. Somehow, there is a "moulded" set-up to the business of crime-reporting, making the task of honest news-breaking nearly impossible.

Reluctance to hand out information by police officials is compounded by the fact that we are expected to report only what they tell us to report. To "sweeten" the facts, to leave out vital information was not a job good journalists could agree to doing. I would never fit the mould. Either way, whether I did or didn't, information was going to be in "hand-out" style.

Follow-ups are just as bad. "Police are investigating..." is a line I use when police sources want to say nothing until enough time has lapsed for the story to have been forgotten.

It's not because I am a female placed in a world where only men, and uniformed men at that, operate, that I was to encounter difficulties.

To me the purpose of reporting on crime is to



Rana is a Jordan Times reporter. She was recently short-listed for the MEDNEWS journalism prize in Cairo for an article entitled "Murder in the Name of Honour"

unveil the facts that these things happen and that someone, somewhere should be doing something about it.

I'm not out there, as many people presume, to unveil a negative image of the country to its people or to the outside world.

I merely want to make sure that society knows about itself.

It is hard to get information on these subjects. Information is a heavily guarded fortress. And those who hide it know how to slip out of their offices for "meetings" straight after a crime or accident has taken place.

My reporting on crime is never, unfortunately, comprehensive in the sense that it includes most details; nor am I ever able to report on every single crime that occurs. So many details, so many horror stories remain unreported in Jordan. And to make it worse, the stories that go unreported are the ones that involve honour crimes, rape and child abuse.

It is so easy for an official to say "I do not know anything about this incident... I never heard of it," or "I know about it, but don't dream of getting any information," when some girl out there has been shot by her brother and when the consequences and circumstances of her death are not an issue with society at large.

It is sad to know that honour means two different things to people. The honour to be upright and just and peace-loving.

And the honour to kill a wayward human being.

It is my belief that information can work to affect the way we live for the better. Fear of information means an unhealthy secret is lurking within us. In any case, I'm not leaving just yet. Not as long as abuse and crime continue to plague us out on our streets and inside our homes.

These are the days of 'spin control'

Continued from page III

striven for the best part of its history to play a bridging role between government and journalists.

To this newspaper I owe much of the experience that has enabled me to combine officialdom with no contradiction in terms or outlook.

I learned a great deal from my stint there and from the people I worked with: P.V. Vivekanand who taught me how to write news and how to edit, Elia Nasrallah (Abu Nader) a master in translation and the behind-the-scenes dynamo at the news room, Abdullah (Hasanat) who always

insisted on the "human" dimension of a news story or feature article, and many others, who are too numerous to be mentioned by name.

Rami Khouri, who was editor-in-chief at the time I joined as a full-time reporter, deserves much credit for what the newspaper is today.

He is also one of the people who believe in young talent and who inspired and encouraged many of us to go into this field.

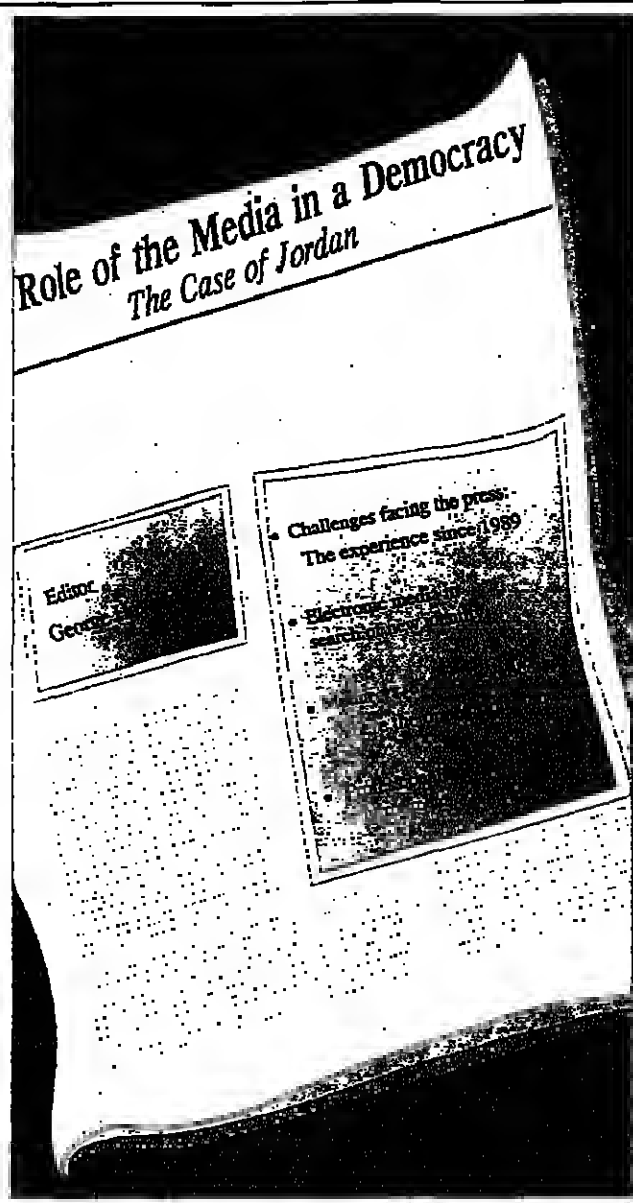
George Hawatmeh deserves words of appreciation not only for putting his heart and soul into the paper, but also for "pushing" many of the Jordan

Times veterans to produce our best.

Of course, the round of thanks would not be complete without tribute to the reporters and writers at the Jordan Times, the colleagues with whom so much has been shared and who continue to teach me something new every day.

Editor's note:

The following articles below and on page VII are reprinted from "The Role of the Media in a Democracy: The Case of Jordan," a book published by the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies. The book compiles the proceedings of a seminar organised by the University of Jordan in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Sept. 27-28, 1994. Some articles have been abridged for use in this supplement.



The changing role of the press: Jordan's experience since 1989

By George Hawatmeh

THE NEW democratic era that was ushered in by the 1989 parliamentary elections has been marked by profound change in the Jordanian political system. The emergence of a parliamentary opposition, led by the Islamists, has forced a new political game that is being played under different rules and conditions.

Meanwhile, the role of the Jordanian media, in not only reflecting this change but also in showing the way towards greater democracy, has been coming under increased scrutiny.

While critics charge that the process of democratisation has failed to bring about a media that is free and determined enough to tip the balance in favour of democratic forces and practices, the regime and many of its supporters believe the press has exceeded the limits of what is permissible in a country trying to protect its existence and interests.

King Hussein, speaking publicly on two occasions just before and after the signing of the peace treaty with Israel on October 26, 1994, lashed out at the press, accusing "most (newspaper) columnists" of exercising intellectual terrorism against the people and siding with foes of the state.

A thorough, objective study has not been done yet on how the media has fared in the five years since the start of political liberalisation.

A couple of international institutions concerned with freedom of expression (the Washington-based Freedom House and the London-based Article 19) did ask the question and reach their own conclusions.

But neither was in a position, it seems, to define with any degree of accuracy, the scope and significance of the real change that has taken place since 1989, except perhaps in absolute judgmental terms, where the first concluded that the Jordanian press is now "partially free" and the second cited the 1993 Press and Publications Law as the impediment to making real progress in performing the mission of the media.

Any accurate assessment of the media's performance in any democratising country cannot be made without first defining what that mission is or should be.

In other words, success or failure by journalists in doing their job largely depends on what perception they have of their profession. Should they be simply pursuing the truth? Or are they out to inform their public, serve as its extended eyes and ears, protect its right to know and safeguard its interests?

Here, then, are two tracks in which an attempt to measure the performance of the press in Jordan can be made. (The electronic media is another story altogether since it continues to be solely in the hands of the regime, losing or winning sporadic freedoms in covering news and views depending on which prime minister and minister of information are in office at the time).

If Jordanian journalists were like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, including countries with long democratic traditions, simply pursuing the truth, then there would hardly be any change in whatever they have been doing since 1989 and after.

To give just one example, there were reports of secret Israeli-Jordanian contacts over a 20-year period from the early 70s to just before the Washington Declaration was signed on July 25.

The Jordanian press looked into those reports neither before 1989 nor afterwards, although the interest of the Jordanian public in them was, clearly, tremendous.

To be fair, though, the blame cannot fall squarely on the shoulders of the press, because had any newspaper tackled the subject before 1989, it would have been closed immediately.

Today, under the new Press and Penal laws, the editor and reporter could be jailed for up to two years for committing such "offence" but the newspaper as a whole would presumably survive.

Furthermore, with an official mentality that sees the truth as none other than the safeguarding of the security of the state or the unity of its people, and a mainstream press that takes seriously the limits of its own power, it will take journalism some years, if we are on the optimistic side, to adopt the pursuit of truth as its mission.

But this conclusion should not undermine the efforts or lower the aspirations of Jordanian journalists. Pursuit of the truth, in any case, is as relative as truth itself. Even in

the freest countries newsmen know that the best they could do is to serve as a channel for relaying truths arrived at elsewhere, by the politicians or the scientists or the bureaucrats. And if this is indeed the case, it has to be admitted that the Jordanian journalists have done better than before, if only because the politicians, at the very least, have improved their performance.

What must be kept in mind is that Jordan now has political parties and a functioning parliament, institutions that were more or less absent before. Besides, there have been improvements in the professional skills of print journalists (although much remains to be desired in this regard) and in the quantitative and qualitative aspects of publications.

Jordan today has more newspapers and magazines (including party-affiliated, financial-oriented and specialised publications) than it ever had.

The publications that existed before 1989 grew in size and their quality of production (printing, typesetting, etc.) generally improved. Moreover, these publications employ more people than the case has ever been.

Experienced journalists, mainly those who returned from Kuwait after the Gulf crisis, swelled the ranks of reporters and editors to a record number (from about 150 licensed journalists in 1989 to 260 in 1994). Tabloids, which are not always a welcome addition to the press in any country, sprang up, contributing an element of vitality to journalistic work.

Watchdog — second track

In the second track of measuring movement by the press since 1989, in the realm of journalism serving as a watchdog, the task and method of calculating progress is compli-

a "poetry" club reserved for a limited number of cronies.

It is interesting to note that most, if not all, of these "daring" articles and opinions were carried by the tabloid press, just as the bulk of whatever investigative reporting that was done over the past five years was also carried by the party and tabloid newspapers.

Who is establishment?

So where does that leave the established press, namely the three Arabic dailies, which were established before 1989 and which many people accuse of not doing enough to grasp the new democratic atmosphere of the day?

After all, critics would argue, the tabloids and the party papers are read by only a small fraction (less than 10%, according to one study) of newspaper readers in Jordan every week, leaving a huge gap for a new critical press to fill.

Some analysts raise the issue of what kind of journalism (the sensational, the critical, the mainstream, etc.) contributes the most to the cause of democracy in a small, vulnerable country like Jordan.

All agree, though, that greater vigour by the pro-establishment newspapers, and a more critical attitude, are indeed required—even essential—to consolidate the democratisation process.

The important question is why that has not happened so far, and what picture can be expected to emerge as the mainstream newspapers pick up momentum towards that end.

Five factors can be cited for why the established Jordanian dailies have not risen to the challenges and satisfied their readers' expectations.

First, because democratisation in Jordan was not a revolution; and those who manned the transforma-

the advent of institution building where journalism was concerned.

True that without greater affluence of society or initiating a new drive towards civil and individual rights, sophisticated institutions cannot be built.

However, there exist in the world today models of institutions that could and should be set up in the Kingdom in order to help the press improve its performance: such as press clubs, institutes or foundations, organisations which basically concern themselves with the rights and responsibilities of the news media.

The fifth reason why the established press has not achieved a qualitative jump in the democratic era is found in the many legal restrictions that the 1993 Press and Publications Law has imposed on its forward movement.

But more importantly, perhaps, it is in the political and socio-economic fields that the leaders of the press have failed to find themselves, to establish new policies for the new era.

Take the role of the media in the Gulf crisis as an example. The Jordanian press, instead of playing the role of the educator, the eye-opener, and the opinion maker of the public on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was itself led by popular sentiment on the issue. Jordanians still remember how their journalists defended the country's position in support of Iraq against heavy criticism from the West, the Arab World and in Iraq itself. At the time, the journalists simply said that their words could not be but a mirror image of what society was saying.

Little did they know that in less than three years after the crisis, when King Fahd refused to see King Hussein during the latter's pilgrimage visit to Mecca and Medina on March 8, 1994, the journalists would stop acting as a reflection of public sentiment.

At that point, not one Arabic-language newspaper talked about or even mentioned almost every Jordanian's anger and dismay with the Saudi king's snub to King Hussein and consequently Jordan as a whole.

Politics vs. identity clash

This is the political side of what can be called the press identity crisis, which only a few journalists admit and are trying to do something about.

The role of the press in the country's socio-economic development is another important topic that is hardly being discussed, let alone tackled in any serious way.

The established press is not ready yet to oppose social norms or socio-economic trends that impede the establishment of a civil society either because editors do not want to confront people with new truths or, unfortunately, they believe business is more important than crusades to end people's misery and ignorance.

For instance, one daily's editor refuses to cover or even publish a small news item about the trial of a fellow journalist over violating a controversial article in the Press and Publications Law, but opens the paper's pages to a broken poem by a senior official.

Another daily constantly calls for social justice for all citizens, but does not apply this justice in, for example, allocating or selling space for obituary notices.

The recent history of the press in Jordan is replete with examples of what might be described as sleazy journalism, unethical practices and lopsided priorities by newsmen. And for that alone, an analyst of the press would devote a whole book.

More historical, ideological, structural and personal reasons can be listed for why the established press has failed to meet the expectations of readers, media critics and political activists in the new age of political pluralism.

But, by the same token, editors can argue that it should not have been expected of the press to outdo the other three estates of government or the citizens themselves in the process of development through democracy.

The theory therefore that the press cannot step way ahead of, or lag well behind, the political system in which it operates is probably as valid for Jordan as elsewhere.

While this might provide some justification for the C-performance of the Jordanian press over the past five years, the fact remains that it would have been untenable to expect a higher achievement.

The press in any country, as it has been well argued, cannot be a paragon of perfection when all human institutions around it are flawed.

While the democratisation of Jordan has brought more freedom and independence for the press, the process has not heralded the advent of institution-building where journalism was concerned.

Institution-building, professionalism:

Prerequisites for a credible journalism

By Ghadeer Taher

I WILL talk briefly about the obstacles blocking the emergence of an active, credible press and attempt in the process to point out where "feasible" answers might be found. I put "feasible" in quotation marks because what is feasible to the journalist may not be so to the administration of a newspaper, or to the authorities, or apply to television and radio.

There are clearly divergent goals and ambitions here.

My colleagues speak of social, legislative obstacles and the absence of developed press institutions as the main dilemmas.

To some in our society, a journalist might be seen as someone who could not get a job elsewhere. The views of society may have slightly improved over the last few years as Jordanians became more exposed to the outside world and to the importance of the media.

But some people still look down on journalism mainly because the press is not seen as a profession but merely as a mouthpiece of the government, receiving instructions and carrying them out.

They are unaware of the trappings of the trade, therefore they do not appreciate what a journalist does.

Another factor contributing to this negative view is the credibility of the local media and the gap between local and foreign media. Although a large number of people read the three staunchly pro-government Arabic newspapers and watch and listen to television and radio, they do not have full confidence in the media.

Several reasons are behind this, including occasional absence of sensitive issues from newspaper pages, one-sided coverage of events and the lack of professionalism in the media.

To find out what is happening in Jordan, many Jordanians turn to Israel Television's Arabic news broadcasts every evening and receive their news from other media organs.

Many people see that journalism's mission is not the pursuit of truth but the safeguarding of the state's interests, making a profit, and often using the newspaper as a public relations tool. This erodes further the local media's credibility.

So what can we do?

To improve our image, we have to develop ourselves professionally and the institutions we work for. When we talk about improving our skills and reducing the credibility gap between the local and foreign press, we have to discuss our main source of information, the government.

Government officials are also part of our society, so they are tainted by the same prejudices. If they do not have respect for the journalist or the institution he or she works for, they simply will not give them information, leaving that journalist lagging behind even further.

In a sense this is a vicious circle. Many officials complain that there are those in the local press who do not know how to ask questions, that they prefer to deal with the foreign media which does not have to worry about censorship when quoting officials or reporting events.

Simply put, we need training for incoming journalists, and refresher courses for more seasoned journalists and editors.

The newspapers must send journalists and public information officers for training either abroad or here in Jordan.

Al Ra'i newspaper, which makes huge profits every year, appears to send journalists abroad only when their training or visits are paid for by someone else. Why

should they since they are making profit with the staff they already have?

Dr. Ziad Rifai has mentioned that training is not taken seriously in our societies. It is seen as an embarrassment, a sign that the person is "lacking". This cultural aspect must be addressed.

One way, perhaps, is to make mandatory certain hours of training every year for all new-comers and to draw up a different programme for senior level staff so that training is not seen in a negative light.

Individually it is difficult to push newspaper managements to institutionalise a programme where one or more journalists are sent abroad every year, or where a professional journalism programme is set up here in Jordan.

Unfortunately we cannot rely on the Jordan Press Association to act as a pressure group in the pursuit of journalists' interests. It is clear that we need collective action. This, as George Hawatmeh has mentioned, is where institution-building is important.

These institutions should include a press club or press foundation, an organisation concerned with rights and responsibilities of journalists.

So far we have not made any progress on this. One of the reasons is the objection of the Press Association which enjoys a monopoly over journalistic practice in the country, with implicit or direct backing by the government.

In the field of training, I think we need to train people in economic reporting and analysis. In light of the peace process and people's expectations of a better economic future, there will be greater demand and emphasis on economic reporting.

To improve the institutions we work for, money must be spent, an unwelcome idea to presumably any administration.

I worked at the Jordan Times for several years before working for German Radio, so I can only talk about our newspaper and its sister Arabic daily Al Ra'i.

On the professional level we cannot expect the chairmen of the board or even editors-in-chief of the major newspapers, who are benefiting from the status quo, to change colour just because the country initiated a democratic experiment.

The top echelons have remained essentially the same in the mainstream press. As they say, you cannot teach an old dog new tricks, many staff members saw no need or were unable to change. State security and the "need" not to rock the boat are the overriding concerns in determining policy, rendering timely coverage of news a second or third priority.

The government still has majority shares in the three major newspapers.

While the government may not directly interfere in running, or dictating editorial policy of newspapers, this must have a psychological effect on the employees and the credibility of the paper.

Examples of untimely coverage include the time when King Hussein was diagnosed with cancer. Israel's Arabic news broadcasts carried the news while Jordan's media stayed silent, thus causing great anxiety in Jordan.

(Continued on page IX)

Ghadeer Taher was appointed press secretary to the prime minister in July 1995. She was a freelance reporter for Newsweek magazine and the Boston Globe newspaper. She started her career in journalism at the Jordan Times and later joined German Radio (ARD) as a correspondent in Amman.

Press: 1989

Duality in dealing with the local and foreign media

Investigative reporting in the Jordanian press

By Salameh Ne'matt

FIVE YEARS into democratisation in Jordan and there still exists a large gap between the way the local media covers the peace process and reporting on it by foreign correspondents in the country.

This gap, which also exists in covering other topics of regional and/or international importance, is the product of restrictions and limitations imposed on the local press by government regulations, on the one hand, and the failure of the local media itself to develop despite the relative openness provided by political liberalisation, on the other.

Indeed, many stories carried by foreign news agencies, newspapers and broadcast by foreign radio stations beaming to Jordan and the region, either never see the light in the local media or are heavily edited.

The almost full freedom to report enjoyed by foreign correspondents in Jordan—many of whom are Jordanians trained at local newspapers—has undermined the standing of the local media among the people and subsequently damaged the government's credibility.

It often seems, ironically, as though foreign correspondents and local reporters are covering two different countries.

Coverage of major developments since the Washington Declaration signed on July 25, 1994, and the signing of the peace treaty with Israel about three months later, was led by the international press.

Very little coverage originated with the local media which continues to be heavily dependent on foreign sources rather than the other way around, as should be the case.

Meetings in Jordan between Jordanian and Israeli leaders are exhaustively reported first by the Israeli media and foreign correspondents before the local media moves to catch up, without adding much substance to the event, if any.

While dozens of Israeli journalists accompany their leaders on foreign trips and major meetings, where they receive up-to-date briefings and news, their Jordanian counterparts are conspicuously absent.

The local media hardly maintains any foreign correspondents in other countries, even those of paramount importance to Jordan. Perhaps no more than a dozen

By Lamis Andoni

BEING A correspondent for foreign publications and at the same time a local journalist, I can say that investigative reporting in Jordan has taken a step forward since the democratisation process began.

But, at the same time, I can see that impediments and obstacles remain in the face of all journalists who are trying to do their job, which is to seek the truth.

A basic problem lies in the lack of institutionalisation in so far as journalism as a craft is concerned. But I talk about something other than the Press and Publications Law because I consider that our duty as journalists is to do something for the near future and to organise ourselves in an attempt to change.

I do not know what might happen, but we must continue to fight for freedoms of press, expression and political organisation. The press should have a major role to play in achieving that goal.

I would like to begin, though, by tackling the all-too-important issue of whether we in Jordan have what might be called a "journalistic culture."

The journalistic culture here is part of the dominating culture in the country. The dominating and prevailing culture here does not give or believe in offering equal opportunities.

Without raising any questions, it accepts elitism and class discrimination. The so-called "alternative press" which we have now, whether that of the opposition or the tabloid newspapers, is suffering tremendously from this kind of elitism.

I want to say it very frankly: what are the terms of reference for this elitism in the press in our country? The terms first entail getting closer to the centre, i.e. the regime. This means that journalism will function, perform and be judged by how close or distant journalists are from the centre of power and by how much they agree or disagree with the regime's policies.

This approach might be wrong or hypocritical but unfortunately it is pursued. Journalists here are not from the fortunate groups of society in economic terms. They are not from the upper or even middle classes. They are still discriminated against.

Discrimination against them is exercised not only by officials and chief editors, but also by fellow journalists, especially "English-speaking journalists" like us. We are journalists who have relations with the West and write for foreign newspapers.

Being correspondents for foreign publications does not mean that we know the country better than those who

By Dr. Ziad Rifai

THE SUBJECT of media training is a complicated matter that entails tackling social, cultural, economic and political issues. Literature about human resource development in the media, on the other hand, remains limited despite the abundance of institutions and projects that train media personnel.

What makes the issue of media training more difficult is its interdependence with a variety of communication models, skills and professions which symbiotically lead to the final product.

The skilled media workforce includes journalists, writers, photographers, engineers, technicians, directors, and broadcasters, most of whom are community-college and high-school graduates.

As a further distinction, university graduates themselves have varied qualifications. Not all are members of the Jordan Press Association, however.

These facts make resource development in media training a difficult issue to tackle. I should point out that this paper will not attempt to define the media as either an acquired skill or a natural talent, even though both can be viewed as two sides of the same coin.

The issue of media training takes on additional dimensions in democratic societies, especially in infant democracies like Jordan's, because of the vital role played by the media in the transition period.

The media's role as a watchdog in times of change keeps the public aware of developments and enables them to take an active role in an evolving society. Consequently, the media becomes a mirror image of an advanced democratic society.

For the media to assume its designated role, the training of personnel should be based on a new philosophy and values that incorporate concepts such as liability and responsibility while

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Status of media training in Jordan

upgrading technical and journalistic training that would enable them to enhance performance and react responsibly to the inherent challenges of democratisation.

However, stringent measures to test liability need to be established to prevent an important institution as the media from having to relinquish its role in the process of democratisation.

While qualitative training is vital at all times, it takes on additional importance in the transition period as people in this field adapt to the new institutions and trappings of democracy.

Media institutions and training

The concept of training is virtually absent in Jordanian media institutions, particularly in radio and television. This may be attributed to the fact that the press is comparatively more developed than the electronic media which requires higher technical standards. A study of the general media will most certainly illustrate the Jordanian case.

At first, media dealt with literary creations, evolving eventually to include politics, but even then, it dealt with opinions rather than hard news. Media control was almost always within the private sector, which addressed its vision of society's needs in a literary and symbolic manner. Media professionals were, consequently, mainly literary and, to a lesser extent, political writers.

On the technical side of production, the printing of newspapers was based on simple, uncomplicated methods that did not require much training, and indeed, technical aspects of production were not emphasised.

The lasting legacy of this style of management was that opinion

was valued over investigative skills. This is widely seen in Jordanian media today and invariably affects the common concept of training. Journalists remain complacent and dogmatic within a system that has adapted itself to receiving the news instead of going out to look for it.

The majority of those who work in the Jordanian press have not undergone systematic training before or during the course of their careers. The only training available is practical—learning from experienced colleagues—and on a personal basis, depending on the individual, who learns by grasping the style of editors and veteran journalists.

Jordanian newspapers, therefore, lack training programmes for both newcomers and old-timers, despite the fact that the law requires companies to allocate one per cent of their annual budget for training and research.

Instead, newspapers spend a part of these funds on travel, and sometimes on technical training if new equipment is installed, but rarely on basic training programmes for media personnel.

This kind of training does not provide an adequate chance to learn, largely because of the strains of work and limitations of time. Furthermore, veteran journalists who are entrusted with training newcomers are themselves in need of training, particularly as Jordan grapples with its infant democracy.

If we assess the development of Jordanian newspapers over recent years, we find growth everywhere: in the number of staff employed, the number of pages, the volume of advertisements.

Unfortunately, though, quality and substance in the editorial content have remained stagnant. Editors of daily newspapers often admit that they have not

taken full advantage of the democratisation process, by shying away from controversial issues and toeing the establishment line—unlike weeklies.

Only in very rare instances have newspapers held training programmes, and even then, results were not encouraging.

A daily once held a course to computerise news handling by editors and reporters. While few attended, it is worth mentioning that the course had no obligatory status and did not offer any incentives.

In addition, there are some training courses offered for journalists inside and outside Jordan, although the number of attendees is usually low.

These courses are mainly sponsored by international or regional organisations but valued only as a travel perk rather than an opportunity to enhance skills. Newspaper editors tend to view these courses as a bonus for journalists, introducing a bias into the selection process in many cases.

Language poses an additional barrier to participation in training courses abroad, as only those proficient in a foreign language can take part. Similar courses in Jordan are not generally welcomed by journalists and do not generate the same enthusiasm.

This applies mainly to Arabic dailies. Journalists in English-language newspapers take advantage of training courses abroad and thus enjoy an edge over their counterparts from the Arabic press.

Yarmouk's department of journalism

The department was established at Yarmouk University in the early eighties. However, the first batch of graduates lacked essential practical skills since

the faculty was not initially well-equipped.

An entrance examination required that students have the minimum language skills and cultural background. When this examination was eventually removed, more students joined the programme, only to discover that there were not enough jobs for them upon graduating. Only a few of the over 1,400 graduates actually worked in radio and television.

The unsatisfactory level of the graduates may be attributed to:

- lack of practical training;
- inferior academic standards;
- lack of specialisation in the vital skills like direction, photography, broadcasting, editing, etc.;
- lack of geographical proximity to media centres in Amman and to the cultural and political life of the country.

Programme at University of Jordan

The two-year programme was established at the University of Jordan in the mid-eighties for BA graduates of journalism with the aim of providing practical and academic media training in different fields. The programme was discontinued two years later, however, due mainly to the following reasons:

- half of the journalists, and over two-thirds of television personnel did not hold a BA in journalism;
- the main aim of many participants was to obtain a Masters degree in journalism, but they were disappointed because the programme only awarded diplomas;
- there was not enough specialised staff in this field;
- there was no practical training, and instruction was all theoretical.

Scholarships and courses

Among the most popular channels of training media personnel is sending them on scholarships and courses overseas. Television and radio tend to utilise these tools more often than the print media. Some courses held in Jordan are sponsored by regional or international organisations, i.e. the United Nations, pan-Arab organisations or European institutions specialised in media training. Foreign experts are often invited, but the priorities of such courses often reflect those of the sponsoring organisation rather than the actual need of the trainees.

Some of the courses held in Jordan are nationally sponsored. However, they often lack the necessary equipment and proper funding.

But courses held in other foreign countries include a number of drawbacks:

- the language barrier;
- the type of training (which often means participants are trained on equipment not available in their home countries);
- selecting trainees is often based on personal preferences rather than on the needs of less skilled employees.

A final disadvantage is that a participant is often the only person who benefits as he/she is often unwilling to share his/her new knowledge with colleagues upon return.

Obstacles in media training

Basic concepts about media training in the country remain unresolved. The concepts of criticism, free press and readers' rights are vague or are not

yet defined by the profession itself. Furthermore, no emphasis is placed on the importance of either research or archiving.

No library of Jordanian newspapers for research purposes exists and archives are not comprehensive. Apathy of both the profession and public with regard to opinion polls or readers' input precludes engendering any real change in the media and society.

Journalists admit that training is an integral part of the job, but no Jordanian media institution offers serious training programmes or allocates funds for this purpose. Also institutions do not assess productivity.

Payrolls do not differentiate between those with or without training, and do not offer moral or financial incentives for those taking part in such programmes. Trainees are not asked to report on the training they receive.

Low salaries often force journalists to look for other sources of income. Hence we find many who have second jobs. Consequently, journalism is "just another job" for many.

It is worth mentioning that the Press Association does not play a part in providing training, nor does it monitor the status of journalism and journalists.

A lack of emphasis on training, coupled with a lack of incentives to participate in such programmes, discourages journalists from participating in available programmes, especially in local courses.

In addition, journalists, especially graduates of the Yarmouk journalism department, and veterans, feel they have mastered their trade and do not need training.

Finally, media instructors are scarce, and most give only theoretical lectures, which have little to do with practical needs at work.

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The good Arab-English guide to the Jordan Times

By Haya Hussein

WHAT'S GOOD English? The English don't know, that's for sure.

But it has been proposed, and it has been argued, and it has been scripted by several cultural theorists, that language is not the abstract science of communication it is presumed to be, but the hybridised dialogues of the post-colonial self that enters into the discursive space of nationality and oratoricality, culture and culture. Literary jargon?

Yes. But how would you know, unless I told you?

There's no such thing as a standard English language. Or an "international" English. The same goes for American and Australian. The Australian literary scene is now more Greek, Italian, Arabic, Chinese and the diverse aboriginal languages, than it is English. Better still, good experimental writers use a mixture of all these languages, yes, a hybridised linguistic form.

And that's why we have the Jordan Times. These aren't language mistakes or typing errors you see on the pages everyday. We're setting a trend.

No, seriously. It's a cruel legacy of the colonial era. The British came and left. We're only looking with wonder at what they left behind, gloriously picking it up with our thumbs and forefingers and taking our time deciding what to do with it.

What's not theirs any more.

What's ours to abuse. No seriously, again. The Jordan Times

reporters and columnists don't make language mistakes, they argue out their idiomatic differences.

They poetise the colonial idiom, they mark it with their stamps of identity. New world order English with a small 'e'.

If it were up to me, I wouldn't bother editing. Like Jamaican, Indian or African English, we could have an Arabic English. It would go, something like this:

-Ya'ni, mish this what you saying? -Ya'ni, shoo, you don't believe?

-Walleh, mish you said you won't?

-What, ya'ni ama inahat-hat-hat? (read: bother you)

And the letters to the editor would read:

To the Editor: I must express my most auspicious predictions when reading what your esteemed newspaper published last Saturday regarding X. It is a question of the time before we get out-dated with the rose-petals of our expectations, for self-fulfilling prophecies are, at best, soul-less. It is with the great regard of seriousness with which we view the future prospectives of this wise and noble country that I am hereby to present this letter for immediate and precipitant publication.

And the news reports would read: AMMAN—(Petra) The Ministry of Planning yesterday signed an agreement with the delegation to extend cooperation and coordination in all fields that matter to the issues and stated that it was greatly indebted to



Haya is a staff writer and assistant editor

and grateful for and much appreciative of the efforts extended by the said delegation in its much needed aid and assistance to this part of the region which has seen developments in peace efforts as a result of its long endeavours to build a prosperous and economically enhanced region.

And the columnists would write: THE SCHEDULED convening and gathering of a meeting of financial economists in Amman last week marks the beginning of a well-foreboding path to prosperity in the investment climate of the country. The team of gatherers would do well to remember, however, that the path is a tenuous one and that it must be treaded on very lightly.

But the Jordan Times doesn't do that, unfortunately. It cuts and corrects. It kills the discursive culture of Arabic English that some have tried so hard to breed. (Except if you've noticed, in the three examples of discourse analysis above, there is a clear attempt to live up to the standards of what is deemed "good English", though they all ultimately fail to do so. I was hoping their language would turn out to be a recycled linguistic form; but there you are, language is not always what you intend it to be.)

In any case, what is my point? That we are, through our own not-so-peculiar historical rights, entitled to the occasional abuse and mismanagement of the English language. No English-language newspaper, magazine or any other outlet in a

language not its own, pretends to take things to this limit of perfection. The Jordan Times tries too hard. The "proper" use of the English language is not a measure of social progress in any non-English speaking country.

So what is the Jordan Times?

Well, the way I want to say it:

The Jordan Times is a space for the culturally schizophrenic, the linguistic sado-masochist who sees a true reflection of the Arab World in all its post-colonial turmoil, reflected, not in the meaning of what is written, but in the shape of the scripted sculpture of expressions and the choice of the printed words.

No. Seriously. Wallah, ya'ni shoo.



Dedication beats the pay for foreign journalists

By Cathy King

FOURTEEN MONTHS ago, fresh out of university, full-time employment began for me at the Jordan Times.

Journalism was a life-long dream, a conviction sealed—perhaps a little sadly—when, in my early teens, I saw the film "A Year of Living Dangerously", starring Mel Gibson as a hot-shot reporter in a war-torn land.

It has hardly been dangerous and I will never be Mel Gibson. But a year at the Jordan Times has proved a great introduction to the profession, laced with excitement, frustration and many challenges.

Naturally people ask: Why the Middle East? Why Jordan? Why the Jordan Times? Whatever the reason, rest assured, it was not for the money. I invariably tell my interlocutors.

Having gained a BA in Modern Arabic and looking to combine it with journalism, I contacted the head of the Arabic Language department of BBC World Service Radio, who obliged to see me. Perhaps as good a recommendation as any, he said the Jordan Times was the best English language daily in the region.

Taking up his advice, I began pestering, literally speaking, the Editor-in-Chief. Two months, a couple of letters and several phone calls later, a response arrived.

"We are not in a financial position to cover the cost of the flight or accommodation, nor will we be able to pay you a salary. However, we could pay you an average of JD 15 per article."

(I subsequently discovered the theory behind retaining reporters on a free-lance basis: Without a basic salary, they are financially compelled to cover as many stories per month as is physically possible.)

Most people at home thought it hilarious and my enthusiasm crazy.

After all, joining the "dole" queue, to collect weekly unemployment benefit, would prove more fruitful.

Sometime after my arrival in Amman, the boss probably rued the day he let me join the team. As though the period was not hectic enough with the imminent signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, late one evening five men from the Ministry of Labour came to "track me down", or so it felt.

Despite the argument that a free-lancer was paid by the piece, the ministry took the case to court and the newspaper was fined. (For the record and thanks to the paper, I am no longer an illegal alien.)

The Jordan Times has hosted many foreigners. We come, we see, we learn and then return to our homelands hoping to impress some media corporation with, if not our talents, our seemingly dogged dedication to the trade. (The unfounded coceptions the Middle East conjures up to the minds of many, have obscure advantages for some.)

Despite the use-and-abuse attitude attached to visiting and aspiring journalists, the paper's staff still finds time to be a guiding force. Why? I'm not sure. Maybe there is sufficient gratification in knowing that some who passed through the newspaper later joined Reuters, the BBC or the Financial Times.

But it is not only foreigners who have been picked up by the great and mighty. Just a glance at the names of those working in the various national press offices or international Amman bureaux, almost without exception, you will see that there is someone who passed through the hands of the Jordan Times.

Whatever the faults of the paper (and we on the inside are well aware of them, while many on the outside delight in reminding us), this must say something more than the poor rate of pay and the lack of

facilities that would quickly drive lesser people away.

But there are two reasons why it seems pointless to harp on the constraints long faced by the newspaper.

First, the last six months have witnessed a revolution. The office space was expanded; two direct telephone lines were recently installed; and the process, albeit slow, of computerisation began.

Second, the paper has survived only because of the tenacious few, who persevered year upon year with little more than a shared print press at their disposal.

Even with the changes, do not dare imagine that it is all rosy in the freshly painted news-house on University Road. Many physical obstacles still bar the path of aspired perfection and these hurdles form part of our defence.

Most of the staff are regularly subjected to barrages of criticism from readers. If only the criticism were constructive, though, there might be some benefit.

And consider this: If all your work and efforts were available for public scrutiny on a daily basis, would you be as confident to poke fun?

You may be wondering, if the main problems facing the Jordan Times boil down to limited equipment and overall inadequate financing, why does the management not invest more heavily in the paper and its staff?

Surely, I bear you say, a better quality newspaper would increase readership and in turn increase economic returns.

Herein lies a fundamental drawback. As a foreign language newspaper, readership is restricted. The question the management (possibly) asks is: Why invest in a newspaper whose readership will never exceed half the circulation of Al Ra'i?

Also, assuming there is no room



Cathy is a reporter at the Jordan Times

in the market for a second English language daily, the likelihood of competition is slim. However, should a new, impressive English publication hit the news-stands, you may just find all of us bopied to join it.

Given the negativity that has glossed these pages, you may well believe the above speculation. But allegiances, when tested, sometimes hold out.

Maybe it is a management ploy. The old-timers have fought for everything we have, and the battle continues. (There still are not enough desks, chairs or computers and the printed material from the wire services is unreadable.)

Maybe by gradually, gradually, gradually meeting those demands, it is enough to keep us hanging-on in there.

It is a serious claim that, if you did not know how the newspaper is, though more particularly was, produced on a daily basis, you would consider it a miracle that there ever was a Jordan Times at all.

It's a good thing there is. The Baghdad Observer would never have taken me.

Alas! Poor English! She is (not quite) dead

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

PERHAPS THE most fitting issue to write about on the occasion of the Jordan Times' twentieth anniversary, an occasion which is of importance to its staff, its columnists and its readers is a subject related to the newspaper itself.

What has interested me, personally, for sometime is the paradoxical situation of an Arab (like myself) writing in English for an Arab newspaper published in English.

By analogy, the paradox applies to a portion of the paper's readers: native speakers of Arabic developing the habit of reading an English daily in an Arab environment.

This is somewhat peculiar for the citizens of today's world, who with a few exceptions, read national newspapers written in their own native language. Thus the American reads the New York Times, the English the Guardian, the German Der Spiegel, and so forth. This is the norm.

Isn't it somewhat abnormal then for a Jordanian to read or write for a national newspaper written in a foreign language?

For the writer in particular, this peculiarity poses another problem. Generally, people write out of an urge to express themselves and out of the hope that what they write will be read by a substantial number of people.

No matter how committed authors are to the theory of expression (i.e. I feel something regarding a certain matter and I wish to voice my thoughts), they are ultimately "pragmatic," that is, aspiring to share feelings, ideas and opinions with someone out there who will find such feelings, ideas and opinions interesting enough to seriously interact with.

One writes in the hope of cheering somebody up, amusing somebody, encouraging, supporting, influencing, provoking or even causing anger.

The writer gives birth to a text; the reader rears it, nurtures it, or kills it.

When one begins writing for the Jordan Times, one therefore begins with a feeling of anxiety and scepticism. How many people read the Jordan Times? Most writers are greedy; they adore large audiences. This does not mean that small numbers are insignificant. No. My firm conviction is that even if there is only one faithful reader out there who takes the Jordan Times seriously, this one reader is worth writing for. It is my belief that writers write under the illusion, or hope, that what they write matters and that they do influence someone's life somewhere.

They love it when the territory of influence expands. How many people read an English daily in Jordan? This is one issue of concern to me.

Another important question for me is, who reads the Jordan Times? Well, obviously speakers of English. However, how many foreign nationals living in Jordan (who constitute a significant portion of the paper's readership) are interested in local issues—not those issues related to the recent political developments (the peace process, democracy) or to historical and touristic areas, to culture, to traffic, and so forth—but to issues which have a direct bearing on the life of the average Jordanian in the inner cities, the countryside and the desert?

How many would really be interested in sewer leakage in eastern Amman, water shortages in some residential areas, mosquitoes in Irbid, litter in recreation areas, and other issues? The writer, who does not have exact figures and statistics at his disposal, cannot but wonder.

And if these readers are interested, how many of them (and this is the more important point to stress here) are actually directly affected by those issues and by what is written on them?

The pragmatic question crops up again. I do not mean that such readers do not share sound views on traffic, on littering, on public services, on economic development, on educational problems, on impediments to social development. They may. What I mean, rather, is that most readers of the Jordan Times who live or have lived abroad do understand these very issues and do show concern about them in their private and public lives.

A foreign acquaintance, who subsequently became a friend of mine, once, shrewdly but benignly, said to me: "Don't you think you are writing for the coovered? Much of what you say ought to be said to people who cannot read the Jordan Times."

To a great extent, he was right. Ought not what we say about traffic, for example, be read (once in a while at least) by the taxi and "service" drivers?

Now that I have opened more cans of worms than I wished to, let me address the scepticism and anxiety just raised and lure the worms back into the cans again.

If we look at the first issue (English with an Arabic environment) from a certain angle, there is little that is peculiar about the Jordan Times as a phenomenon and about people speaking and writing in English.

Not only do we live in a world where English has become, whether we like it or not, the international language of science, politics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, literature and so on, but an apt competence in English seems to be essential for our survival. At an academic level not only do people draw heavily (if not exclusively) on sources written in English, but they often resort to English terms, concepts and phrases.

Due to the historic circumstances and conditions we are passing through in the Arab World, we have, in the realm of human learning and thought, become con-

sumers but not producers, receivers but not givers, translators (and not very good ones) but not writers.

What is the Arab World's contribution to international thought in the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, literary theory today? Frankly, almost nothing. This is a bitter cultural fact, but it is true.

English has imposed itself on us, in the classroom, in the conference room, in public and in the privacy of our homes; and it will continue to do so for a long time to come.

Looking at the picture from a brighter angle, however, we can say that our modern Arab society (especially in the urban centres) has been for some time and is increasingly becoming bilingual.

How many years of English do we teach our students at schools and universities? How many English majors do we graduate from our public universities in Jordan each year? Not less than 150 from the University of Jordan, 300 from Yarmouk University, 150 from Mu'ta, and so forth. What does this mean? It means that we have among us Arabs who use English daily; that we seem to have decided as a society that English is important to teach and to learn (the English departments at our universities are the most "prestigious" in the Faculties of Arts).

Admittedly, not many among us speak it fluently enough to be effectively understood.

The point is that we can make English work for us. Even though we are not (alas!) at this point in history gigantic thinkers and innovators, we can use English to transfer much valuable knowledge into our classrooms and daily lives, through reading it directly and through translating it.

We owe our society, which spends so much time, effort and money on teaching and learning English, at least that much. Until we can wean ourselves from reliance on English, and until our sons and daughters and the generations to come excel in the various disciplines and spheres, and assert themselves worldwide in ways which we ourselves cannot, we must rely on English as a tool.

In the Arab World English is still a foreign language. I would not be surprised, however, to see it elevated to the status of second language (or even primary language) soon.

But we can use English to express ourselves. Language is not only signs, symbols and words but culture. If we feel that the times we are living are important enough and the events we are experiencing are significant enough to be shared with the rest of the world (and I believe we do), English can play an effective role here.

Those among us who speak and write English well are likely to be more coherent, lucid, effective and persuasive to speakers of English than those who can only write and speak Arabic, for the simple reason that language is culture.

In this respect, the Jordan Times is better able (and I believe it has been able) to express the hopes, aspirations, concerns and fears of our citizens at this moment in history than its sister Al Ra'i, or Al Dustour, or any other Arabic daily or weekly. Clearly, there is an opportunity for the writer in the Jordan Times to be well-heard.

By raising this latter point, we have already addressed, in part, the concern about influence.

A writer for the Jordan Times has a lot to say to the foreign national not only politically but also culturally. Even when one is writing about the sewerage system in eastern Amman (which, by the way, never seems to work properly), about littering our parks, about mosquitoes in Irbid, about cruelty to animals, about the ailments in our educational system, and so on, one is telling a certain truth and revealing a certain aspect of culture which will make a visitor or a long-term foreign resident better acquainted with this society.

It is my firm belief that a better, more thorough acquaintance with a culture (any culture) is ultimately much more rewarding and less damaging than an acquaintance with half the picture, whether the brighter or the more dismal half.

Huck Finn is right: "The truth is hener, and actually safer, than a lie."

But I also know for a fact (through the many conversations I had with people, the phone calls I received and the personal letters and notes) that most English-speaking readers of the Jordan Times are interested in all issues which concern Jordanians, both the more subtle and "refined" and the more blatant and "coarse."

One's only wish in this respect is to see more contributions on the part of those readers, not only through the letters they send to the editor but through the main columns and feature stories.

It is true that a writer or columnist in the Jordan Times does not often reach much of the audience he/she is writing for or about (i.e. most of those in the inner cities and the country-side). In this sense, the Jordan Times cannot replace Al Ra'i. Nevertheless, the number of Jordanians and Arabs who read the Jordan Times is quite substantial, much more substantial than one may at first presume.

I hope the Jordan Times will continue to do its best in living up to the expectations of its readers.

Dr. Majdoubeh is professor of English Literature at the University of Jordan and is the "View from Academia" columnist at the Jordan Times

Same game, different yardsticks

By Rana Sabbagh

I JOINED the Jordan Times shortly after graduating from Beirut University College (BUC) with a B.A. in Communication Arts (Journalism/Drama) in October 1984.

Frustrated at being unable to fulfill my dream of becoming a theatre director of "black comedies," critical of the state of affairs, then an outright taboo, I knocked on the doors of the Jordan Times to fill time while trying to gain acceptance at a U.S. university to pursue my higher studies in drama.

Without realising it, I fell into the journalism trap—a world of open-ended excitement, and as much frustration caused by its limited extension of freedom under a crippling martial law that was only lifted three years ago.

We were five staff reporters working out of a shabby two-floor building on three "East German" OPTIMA type-writers that did not work most of the time because the dealer could never supply the necessary spare parts.

We used low-quality recycled newspaper—which the cafeteria also used as sandwich wraps—on which to type our reports.

This, in addition to the editor's red ink pens, often produced a mixture of illegible scripts—irritating the proof-readers and copy editors, causing chronic delays and producing loads of typing errors.

We had no library or proper research facilities—the basics of any office that wants to call itself a newsroom.

For background information, we frequently had to rely on the short-lived memories of our five editors (including one who was often picked up and



Rana Sabbagh is a Reuters correspondent in Amman

with an offer by Reuters, which was looking for a correspondent to work in its Amman office in return for excellent terms—twice the salary I was earning, the state of the art in news transmission, regular training workshops and an insight into international news making and breaking.

The Jordan Times has been modernised since then, but at the time, it was a big leap into a totally different world—from a country to the world and to a revolution in communications—often ending up as a key source of information for journalists as well as governments across the globe.

The first cultural shock came when I had to grapple with learning how to use a computer, and then, how to write a straight-to-the-point news item with the necessary background for our readers who range from a milkman in Tennessee to a head of state anywhere in the world.

More frustrating, I had to confine myself to a maximum of 60 lines for a major news breaking story and 90 lines for a news analysis. In addition, deadlines changed—from 8 p.m. in the evening to an open-ended one.

The circle of readership changed and so did the thrust of the story. But with that also came anonymity and the loss of feedback from local readers—the cornerstone for the work of any newspaper reporter.

But the often hectic life of a news wire reporter, most of the time an unknown soldier, is compensated by the impact his/her work produces worldwide and the exposure he or she can get in international publications.

The game has not changed but the yardsticks have.

A 'soldier' joins the reporting front

By Sa'ad Hattar

WHEN I first ventured into riding this uneasy career ten years ago, the Jordan Times served as home to budding reporters and acted as a springboard towards professional journalism.

A "retired" high-ranking conscript armed with ambition, a knack for adventure and broken English, I joined the Jordan Times' staff sometime in November 1984.

By mere chance, my first assignment found its way to the front page.

The article covered a Jordanian reaction to a letter bomb aboard a Far-East bound Jordanian aircraft. The plane made an emergency landing before reaching its destination and the letter bomb proved to be groundless.

In November that year, the Palestine National Council (PNC) held in Amman one of its key sessions and the Jordan Times was there for the event. My senior colleagues led the way, but I made sure I would gain as much expertise as I could in order to shape up my skills.

I had to work on both fronts, widening my scope of information and mastering the task of reporting. In that, the Jordan Times served as my alma mater.

I moved from one headline to another with the same enthusiasm and high expectations.

And despite the paper's meagre resources then, it managed to succeed as a reliable newspaper through team effort and dedication of its staff.

It was in those modest newsrooms and behind shabby desks that the



Sa'ad Hattar now works as a journalist for Agence France Presse

scene upon receiving a phone call from a neighbour.

After "baggling" with the cat for an hour to coax her into abandoning a "suicide" attempt, the reporter spiralled up a nearby tree to catch the would-be "victim" just on time.

The next day, she appeared smiling in the Jordan Times. My colleague, Abdullah Hasanat, starred in the same feature under my hyline, as he joined efforts in trying to rescue the cat.

On a more serious note, the Jordan Times proved to be unique in terms of news coverage, as opposed to Arabic-speaking papers.

While the Jordan Times caters mainly for foreign readership in the Kingdom, this paper, reputed for accuracy and intrepid reporting, left a mark on the journalistic map in the Kingdom by attracting English-speaking Jordanians.

Reporting for an English-language newspaper opened windows of opportunity and created access to policy-making circles and diplomatic missions alike.

Like any other career, we had our ups and downs but the bond that tied us all is still as strong as ever.

Some of us moved on to international journalism; others remained on the shores of the Jordan Times. The urge to write again for the Jordan Times is a feeling I think we all share.

Casper, the friendly source ghost

By Nermeen Murad

I WALKED into the Jordan Times in April 1986 armed with nothing but goodwill and a little bit of English. My political background amounted to a couple of courses on American history that I took during my freshman year at American University in Washington D.C.

I was shy, bashful, depoliticised and unsure of who I really was and where I wanted to go.

My first assignment was to attend a press conference held by a 9-year-old at the Haya Arts Centre. I dressed up in my business suit and, accompanied by a more experienced colleague, I assumed my journalist posture and started taking notes.

Back at the newspaper, I sat down and wrote a very flowery article stretching in the process my imagination and my English to the limit. I walked over to the national news editor, an English lady at the time, and handed her my report.

She looked at me, at my extended hand, and told me that I had missed the deadline for the page and that therefore my article would not be published. I thanked her "very much", walked out of the room into a deserted one next to the bathroom, and cried. The editor-in-chief took pity on me and broke the rule for that one time. It was a happy ending.

On this 20th anniversary of the Jordan Times, I have

to give credit to my editors and colleagues for creating out of me a somewhat worthy journalist and, more importantly, a determined, know-it-all, busybody, opinionated woman.

Even though some of my colleagues might now regret their contribution to the shaping of my new person, I am nevertheless grateful to the school of journalism at the Jordan Times. All things considered.

It really was equally to the credit of a host of prime ministers, cabinet ministers, officials, academics, parliamentarians, senators and politicians who have honoured me with their news, views and analyses over the years that I have gained a close understanding of Jordanian politics and society.

Since most of those I have just mentioned prefer to remain anonymous I will not thank them by name. Which brings me to one of the most annoying problems I have faced during my career as a journalist.

Every time a lengthy and controversial news analysis is published, I am liable to more or less the same charge: "Her sources do not exist."

Why? Quite simply, dear critics, because these sources like to remain anonymous.

Phrases like "according to a senior official who asked for anonymity" instigate Jordanian sceptics (and there are quite a few of them around) into pub-

licly declaring that officials are intrepid or daring enough to put their names to whatever they think and that therefore quotes in these reports are "a figment of her imagination."

"Analysts" and "well-informed sources" obviously do not fare better. They are dismissed outright as being either "ghost" sources or at best demagogue or aspiring politicians that I picked off the street.

But as these sceptics and I surely know, genuine sources do exist.

In fact, the Jordan Times has devised a little trick where, after a certain period of time has elapsed, readers are able to guess who these sources are.

"A seasoned analyst" is a particularly opinionated former official who, over the years, has gained the respect of the Jordan Times for his openness and democratic outlook and often accurate analyses.

A "former senior official" is most often a former prime minister, who as we all know, would not take offense at another chance at the top post in the executive authority.

"Well-informed analysts" are usually parliamentarians who are on important parliamentary committees or are close enough to the government of the day to know more than an "analyst" would know. They are the ones who hover around the hopefuls who have a fighting chance for the premiership.

"An analyst" is of course, a politicised legislator or an academic with interest in current affairs and necessarily with an eye to becoming a "well-informed analyst."

But why would the Jordan Times have to resort to this ambiguous list of categories to define its sources?

Because sources, regardless of how influential or outspoken they may be, fear the reaction to their analyses which are usually of a controversial nature.

Our sources have not enjoyed the experience of democracy long enough to turn themselves into declared opinion-makers rather than anonymous news leakers.

I am not in a position to say that these sources always have cold feet about going public with their opinions. Though many of them are definitely more concerned about their political careers, attempts are made to balance that with their concerns about the public's right to know how and why history is made.

While the rules of democracy have impressed on them the important role of the media, only a few have taken advantage of this medium and they are treading on the path to controversial fame carefully.

Journalists, therefore, want to protect the select few who are courageous enough to go public with their opinions and information. They continue to be



Nermeen Murad is the Jordan correspondent for the Italian News Agency (ANSA). She continues to free-lance for the Jordan Times

only a minority, though, and the press is wary of scaring them off because they are a rare and endangered species.

This attitude, or policy, often leaves us in the spot where we find ourselves taking risks on behalf of officials.

We do not usually mind because at the end of it all, while officials and politicians work to influence the political path of the Kingdom, our main objective as journalists remains to seek out the truth, even if we are only aided in that task by Casper, the friendly source ghost.

The old corner column:

Selling catches and catching crooks

By Randa Habib

WHEN I started a bi-weekly column on April 8, 1982 in the Jordan Times under the title "Randa Habib's Corner," I never thought that it would survive for as long as seven years, then to return for another brief appearance in 1990.

When I look back on the days when I joined the Jordan Times, the memory of avant-garde journalism that these years evoke, can only make me smile.

In my first corner I told readers: "One only needs to look around to be made to laugh or cry, and life can assume any colour we wish to give it. Therefore let us enjoy together some gay moments picked up from everyday life..." The anecdotes I shall relate, to you in this column are, about real-life, humders and bricks that will amuse people and hopefully make them think twice... taken in their right perspective. One last thing: any resemblance to persons alive or dead is, of course, intended."

And the corner was launched. I cannot tell you now that it was an easy ride. When you are writing to point out people's mistakes, and when your criticism touches the "untouchables," you can't expect to be left alone.

Readers, however, encouraged me with their letters to the editor, or through direct contact with me. They made me feel we were taking this ride together. And by God, we did.

The column ended up tackling mostly "hot issues." Occasionally, my friend, the editor would call me and say "Randa, this piece of writing is too sensitive. I can't run it. Can you please try to avoid straight politics?"

Of course I never listened, and only politics was ever tackled in the corner, albeit in a tacit and rather ironic way, in order to elude censorship's eyes.

But with time, "Big Brother" learned my methods. And a specific corner on the "White Elephant" led to the end of seven years of writing.

A comeback of the corner was made possible on Feb. 1, 1990 when the democratisation process was well in place in the country.

That corner, I can proudly say, did make a difference and contributed to positive change. For instance, on Oct. 7, 1985 it revealed the existence of an epidemic called "brucellosis" which for some reason, officials had been hiding.

It also unveiled a case of water pollution in 1987. Readers' reactions were so forthcoming that confirma-



Randa Habib has been a journalist with Agence France Presse in Amman since 1980 and director of AFP since 1987. She is also a correspondent for Radio Monte Carlo

American film director Mel Brooks on the front page of the Jordan Times. In the interview, Brooks announced the imminent shooting in Jordan of a film called "The History of James Bond," starring himself.

Quoting Brooks, we wrote that the film tells the story of a legendary hero comically using laser guns and computers while living under tents and riding camels.

The director-producer of "To Be or Not to Be" and many other blockbusters, said in our fake interview that he would be recruiting a number of Jordanians in the film who need not be professional actors.

You can guess the rest. The phones at our offices would not stop ringing. So many people were interested in having a hash at a Hollywood role.

Did that make people think twice? Not at all. On April 1, 1986, a front page, again fake, interview with the French ambassador, then Mr. Patrick Leclercq, who agreed to be an accomplice in the joke, announced that France was sounding out Jordan on participation in the Ariane space project.

The catch was that the door was open for Jordanians to visit the site on the new space project in France.

Mr. Leclercq was cited as saying that France wished to invite a "number of Jordanian citizens to take a first-hand look at the Ariane 3 rocket, as it planned to transform the rocket into a passenger-carrying spaceship in 1991.

People interested to participate in the trip had only to call... And again, the Jordan Times switchboard would not stop ringing.

It wasn't over. April 1, 1987, and this time with the generous participation of the ambassador of Italy, then Mr. Luigi Amaduzzi, it was announced that Italians proposed to transform the valley of Abdoon into a Venice-style lake with gondolas...

No need to tell you what happened. You may still hear about it. Sometimes, somewhere, someone is talking about that "interesting lake project" for the country.

Now to return to my real purpose today.

Twenty years in the life of the Jordan Times have put this newspaper in a leading position with regard to the press of the modern day.

To this ever-developing newspaper, and to all my former colleagues there and all the newcomers in the newspaper, I wish you all a very special twentieth anniversary.

Institution-building, professionalism: Prerequisites for credible journalism

Continued from page VI

The Ma'an riots broke out in April 1989, the local press reported it very carefully but only five days later.

Jordanians heard about the events from foreign news agencies, radio stations and Israel Television. This could be dangerous. For example, when Israel radio and television, the media of our enemy, broadcast an item about Jordan we believe it even when it is false.

During the Gulf war, our columnists wrote enthusiastically about Iraq's victory with very little to back up their claims.

They of course are entitled to their own opinion. But when Iraq lost, not one columnist—I hope I am wrong—felt they had to explain to his or her readers why this happened.

While some continued to maintain Iraq was victorious, others automatically began to write about the defeat. To be blunt, our Arabic-language newspapers lied to the public.

While it is true that newspapers reflect the feelings of the man in the street they also lead public opinion. Simply speaking, our local newspapers were irresponsible.

Which brings us to the question of journalists and the press being accountable to the public. Our job is not only to inform but to assist. The following incident will illustrate what I mean.

The editor-in-chief of the Jordan Times, George Hawatmeh, went to Australia a few months ago, where he met a Jordanian married to an American woman. When they met, the woman said "reading your newspaper nearly killed me."

Because the Jordan Times and the other local press would not or were ordered not to report the riots in Ma'an, which soon spread to other Jordanian cities, this lady who was living

with her family here at the time was not aware of what was happening. She took her children on a picnic to Salt, unaware that there were riots; and that is where the family's lives were put at risk.

I just want to mention that Mr. Hawatmeh was not editor-in-chief in 1989, but the example illustrates how journalists do have a major responsibility in finding and telling the truth, as it happens, to their readers.

There is no such thing as unbiased journalism but there are degrees to which the press can be perceived as fair and credible. Both sides must be heard. The

editor-in-chief must realise that even if he does not agree with the other side, it gives his newspaper more credibility to carry a second opinion. So when the editor-in-chief propagates his own line it is also more believable.

I think we find it difficult enough to try to find solutions for problems in the print media, which unfortunately has not improved much in its coverage of events under the new system of political liberalisation.

The woes and blues of Home News

By Jennifer Hamarneh

THE FIRST day I began my one-week training as the Home News editor, under the professional and exceptionally kind guidance of a senior editor, a free-lance reporter looked at me sideways through the haze of smoke she had just exhaled and said, "So you're the new Page Three editor. Well, we're the writers who are going to give you a hard time."

I looked at her back (she had since returned to her typing), and said, too confidently it now seems: "Oh, I don't think so."

That same week I ran into a former Home News editor (there have been many) who looked at me and said "You're Page Three! My sincere condolences."

I began to ask: what did I allow myself to be talked into?

Page three suffers from dependency: it depends on news from the Jordan News Agency, Petra, from reporters and from other "independent" sources such as government institutions, non-governmental organisations, embassies, and last, but not least, the Royal Court.

Petra stories, which, by the way, must be translated into English, are often lacking in content, focusing more on the person than the event, and more often the actual story is buried somewhere towards the end of the text.

Attempts to contact the appropriate source, usually a government official, for a more accurate picture that would make a better story of the bare bones we are dealing with usually fail, because by the time the items start coming in through the "tickers," everyone has gone home for the day, had lunch and is well into nap time.

We cannot afford to wait, so a ruthless strategy of editing is applied. The result is that sometimes what Petra sent out as a full blown story could find itself as a news brief.

And then there is the issue of language, not so much in the translation but in the outdated, socially insensitive use of words and terminology.

Here, some rather startling examples have surfaced. To give you just a sample, let us compose one sentence applying terminology that is still actually being utilised: "The police, in hot pursuit of a drug addict who killed a deformed off-shoot, came upon the culprit and caught him red-handed."

The edited version might read:



Jenny is Home News editor, staff writer and columnist

"The police, who were chasing a suspect in a fatal hit-and-run incident involving a handicapped person, caught up with the suspect and arrested him."

But if you now think editing can be difficult, let me tell you something about reporting and reporters.

Always short of enough staff and freelance writers, there is no regular system of "beats" that page three can depend on.

Freelancers are often assigned features which they do with a limited sense of urgency at best. Staff writers, most of whom are also page editors, are more than likely to have their stories on the front, back or economy pages.

When one staff writer in particular is in his/her more prolific state, I breathe a sigh of relief knowing that I can count on filling a good amount of space with a truly worthwhile story and maybe even a photo.

Photos, you might guess, are a luxury. Photographs are a significant part of our business—when they're available.

Where Petra photographers have received their training, I cannot begin to imagine; but dispensing with their photographic style, it has become, for editors that is, an art form to try to guess what photos, if any, will actually be delivered to the paper.

When they do arrive, deciphering the three w's is akin to the Abbott and Costello routine of "who's on first, what's on second."

The most you can hope for in terms of identifying the person(s) and event on the back of the photo is a scribble, something to the effect of "minister" or "conference" or

when you are terribly fortunate, "minister at conference."

It is not unfair to say also that many times we were guaranteed, albeit by telephone and not in blood, that a picture of a particular event was forthcoming. Midnight arrives, the night-duty editor is being threatened by the printers, and the blare of the telephone catapults me from my not so sound sleep.

"There's no picture of the Minister of Planning, and now there's 30 centimetres of white space on your page. What the (expletive deleted) do I do now?"

Other organisations, seeking coverage of their activities in the Jordan Times, can be a blessing. Some send in clean, interesting, well-written press releases that require a minimum of editing, usually to suit the newspaper style. But what some of these organisations aim to get into the news may not necessarily be newsworthy or worth the prominence the organisation would like to see their item receive.

It is the page editor's right to use or refuse. When a story is not timely, we first try to tactfully explain that it serves neither the party sending us the item nor our newspaper to run late stories.

We make exceptions, of course, in cases when events take place on Thursdays because we do not print on Fridays, or if the event is locally related but may have occurred abroad, and we find it significant enough to make allowances for lateness.

News of activities of the members of the Royal family can be tricky,

particularly in terms of layout. There is, of course, a protocol that we follow, but when there are several family members all doing something on the same day, page three can begin to look like Royal News.

As the family grows and becomes more active in local events, we may have to consider that option, unless someone has the courage to say that over-coverage overshadows the relevance of the event by the simple fact that Royalty are more popular than the formal occasions they attend or partake in.

Other smaller but sometimes just as significant problems in editing Home News can pop up when you least expect it.

Take, for example, advertisements, which because of the steeper prices on page three, are few and far between. Usually all a page editor knows about an advertisement being placed on his or her page is the size of the ad, rarely anything about the content.

In addition, there is a rule of layout which restricts where advertisements are placed.

When, one day, page three carried three condolences (which are paid for as advertisements are) and another ad announcing the exhibition of works of an artist next to each other, the artist was not pleased.

She wrote a letter to the editor (which was published) and accused me of celebrating death over life.

To that self-centred tirade, I asked: what ever happened to the respect for the deceased?

The box usually at the bottom of the page called "What's Going On," however, is a public service the Jordan Times offers free of charge. (Unlike other more-commercially-minded newspapers, when it deems appropriate and depending on the space available.)

But some organisations, who have nearly a permanent slot in this helpful little section, have come to believe that it is their right to dictate the exact wording of the text.

But then again, attempts to prescribe what goes into a newspaper is not an uncommon phenomenon.

Nearly three years into the never-ending eyebrow-raising, hair-greying, nearly life-threatening job on a page that is meant to carry important local news, I must admit it has been the biggest challenge I have ever faced, and as a Catholic with a Protestant work ethic, I was determined to give it my all.

The troubled life of the Op-Ed page

By Ayman Al Safadi

LAST WEEK, a regular column in the Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed) page was meant to disappear. Its writer maintained that the fee he received in return for his contribution was not suitable—a sound argument, I believe, though my beliefs do not carry much weight in money matters concerning the newspaper.

Unless the Jordan Times raised the fee by some five dinars, the writer said, he would stop writing. Fortunately, he changed his mind at the last minute.

Well, one writer after the other came and went before this episode. So what difference would it have made for this columnist to quit?

All the difference in the world, I would say.

The Jordan Times has worked hard to make its Op-Ed page a platform for debate on the many issues with which our society has been grappling. It has sought to have as many writers address as many issues as possible.

This has always been a rather ambitious goal, however. Soliciting columnists for the Op-Ed page is a task that can discourage many a determined editor. And for more than one good reason.

To qualify for writing in the editorial page of the Jordan Times, a columnist needs to have the ability to express his ideas in proper, clear English, and to convince the hard-to-please reader that he is worth reading. This is a category that is in short supply and high demand.

The first problem with which the newspaper has to deal is to locate this rare breed of men and women. The second is to convince them of the viability of writing.

Many simply do not have the time; others appear willing to write, but only until you mention the fee the financial department is willing to pay them. The result is that the editorial page never features as many Jordanian writers as we would have wished.

This could probably explain why there is only one regular column a day on the page, and why there is so much reprinted material. In light of the dearth of columns and opinion pieces written exclusively for the Jordan Times, it is hard to ignore the need for running some of the articles that appear in the international media or for translating some from the Arabic press.

But the editorial pages of any newspaper are not just about columns and columnists. Letters to the editor are a significant part of all editorial endeavours. All newspapers love to receive and print as many letters as possible. One of our major challenges is to encourage readers to write letters to the editor that contribute to debates on the issues at hand.

It is no secret that writing for newspapers is not an integral part of Jordanian, or for that matter, Arab and Third World cultures. People talk about the problems they face, and they nag their friends and colleagues about them. But they hesitate to use the media as a public forum for debate.

In democratic countries, people take to writing whenever they feel strongly about a particular issue.

In this part of the world, perhaps for the lack of a deeply ingrained democratic culture, people resort to the rumour mill or to using the telephone to discuss their concerns.

Thus the volume of letters to the editor we receive is limited, despite the fact that we do try to publish each and every single one that meets the standards that the paper upholds.

Some letters are so badly written and their substance so blurred that we cannot possibly use them. The "boss" insists that letters to the editor get preferential treatment even when their quality is low. All right, it is my job to fix the material that we receive, especially the linguistic aspect of it; and I do try. But sometimes salvaging some of the letters we get is practically impossible.

"How come you did not publish my article?" asked an uncompromising reader once.

"I am really sorry, sir, but after reading and discussing your letter with other concerned editors, we decided it was not fit to print. We do encourage you to try again though, but please try to be more concise..."

"But I cannot believe you are not publishing my article."

"As I told you, sir..."

"But you must publish it. You have published terrible stories before. Mine is an excellent one. The other day you published an article that was extremely biased, unobjective..."

But whoever said that the editorial page of any newspaper is supposed to be objective? It is in the news section that we do our best to be objective. It is the writers' right to use the editorial page to propagate and argue for the ideas and ideals that they believe in.

In the editorial comments—for our own convenience, we call just editorials—the Jordan Times gives its own views, which the readers might or might not agree with. I presume that we, in the Times, hold liberal ideals that celebrate social, political and economic openness. This is an agenda of which some, especially among the conservative elements in the establishment and society at large, disapprove. But that is their right as much as it is our prerogative to write our opinions through



Ayman is Op-Ed page editor

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editorial comments.

That, at times, can be a source of trouble.

Recent example: When Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin froze an earlier decision to confiscate some land around occupied Jerusalem in May, the Jordan Times editorialised that all that Mr. Rabin did was take the first step towards correcting a wrong that he had made. I gave the editorial the headline "Israel deserves no praise."

Now, what I was not aware of was that His Majesty King Hussein met that evening with a group of Israeli visitors and had praised Mr. Rabin's reversal of the land grab.

The lead story the second day naturally carried the headline: "King praises Israeli move as courageous."

The result was that we appeared as if we were challenging His Majesty. We were not. It was just a coincidence. Someone among us, probably the night-duty editor, should have thought of the impending problem. That, however, did not happen and that is why perhaps our editor eventually took the responsibility upon his own shoulders.

Such incidents take their toll on us but they never stop us from expressing our views through more editorials, opinion pieces and, yes, political cartoons. Even those we usually lift from other newspapers because we do not have, nor can afford, our own cartoonist. Needless to say, this arrangement can just cause us more headaches.

One day, also in May, both the chief editor and myself were away.

A colleague, who had just come back from a two-month leave, was entrusted with drawing the page on an hour's notice. Pressed for time, she grabbed the first cartoon she could lay her hands on. The cartoon was timely, she thought, because it dealt with the same land grab in Jerusalem. She knew the story was one that had received a lot of media coverage.

My colleague was, naturally, unaware of what had happened earlier and even less so of who was caricatured. The choice of that cartoon turned out to be another blunder committed in the space of a few days.

The cartoon did His Majesty the King a great deal of injustice. But being the magnanimous man he truly is, he accepted our apology and understood that it was an inadvertent error on our part.

Such is the work of newspapers. We try our best to be accurate, to keep alert and never to send the wrong messages. But every day is a new start that offers its own headaches, its own challenges and, in a way, its own charm.

More often than not, when the newspaper is fresh from the presses, a reporter looks at his or her story, an editor at his or her page, obsessed with one annoying thought: Heck, I could have done a better job.

And the glamour is never lost.

Five years of a paper's life—an eyewitness account

By Ica Wahbeh

WHAT WOULD one say, and cover it all, on the occasion of a paper's 20 years of existence? And on what strength would I, who have been "in" for a quarter of that time only, say anything at all? Modesty left aside, I will try my hand at something palpable, something I witnessed during that time and that is of no little importance and consequence.

When I first started, beginning of 1990, (at first volunteering to proofread after repeatedly getting lured by the mistakes that you, dear readers, must so often suffer from), our section, proofreaders, of course, was in the Al Ra'i building, a few hundred metres from the Jordan Times, a distance that the poor messengers had to run to and fro tens of times, rain and shine, day and night, to send or fetch an article or a bunch of them.

It was there that the typesetters (the ones we always blame for the mistakes, even though...) and the cafeteria serving the JT were too.

No wonder most of the people doing the above-mentioned jobs kept fit and trim over the years (Abu Ayman, the doyen of the messengers comes to my mind, immediately).

But the amount of time wasted coordinating between various sections of the paper was tremendous and at times it must have been felt by you, too (no paper on the stand means that it came out late and it didn't make it to the distributors so you couldn't buy it).

Our chief editor's effort paid first when the proofreaders were moved to the JT building, a month later.

By then, I had been moved to the editors' room, responsible for the home news page and allotted a desk between the international news editor and the man who could do a paper all by himself, front, Middle East and last pages editor.

There were three editors, other than us, plus two computers (grand-

father's generation), plus reporters (pretty many at the time) cramped in a small place with two big windows overlooking the main street, site of numerous car crashes that were providing us with funny if so tragic a backdrop.

We had three telephone lines and some reporters were doing their interviews for ever, some thought, not to mention that conversations were public knowledge (what privacy in an eight-by-four room?).

I never mastered the skill of whispering as I always had problems understanding the other end (partly to blame on the terrible line connections) and wouldn't want to elicit a similar tone from the caller.

And fortunately I never needed privacy for I rarely do the calling, as my friends would eagerly testify. But I remember the cloak and dagger atmosphere when some colleagues would lower their voices when talking for fear of being scooped by a potential rival.

Quite amusing, if very annoying, for those who were always demanding more lines for more efficient work.

In the summer, when the sun was filling the room, we would always empathise with canned sardines. Feeling very much like them, we would wipe the sweat off our brows, pointlessly repeating the all-obvious "it's so hot", waiting for the winter to come.

Three years later things began to change. Slowly and barely noticeable, but on the right track. First we got wall-to-wall carpeting. Then new desks and a few more lighting fixtures for dark winter nights. A few more telephone sets were booked to the existing lines so one would not have to move so much for a phone call. Then a new computer appeared in the room, a Pandora's gift. I would say, as most reporters were fighting to use it and complaining they had to wait to do that.

Earlier this year we received more computers and as we needed more room to accommodate them, some walls went down and some



Ica is editor-at-large

repositioning was done, with some of us losing our good old places, and the room became more spacious and bright.

New linoleum flooring and new desks for the computers were brought in and, finally, elevated from fish to the more developed family of homo sapiens, we had air condition sets installed just in time for the hot summer we all witnessed this year.

To prove that things come in several at a time (they say bad things usually come in three), one day, two months before Christmas but feeling as good, we saw these insipid boxes that bad goodies for us.

So we had the chance to choose a telephone set each (or almost) and what's more, we got our own extension line each.

No more pranks, no more asking the Al Ra'i operator to "please give me a line", no more nails broken dialing, no more... well I guess complaints. Not that we won't find something to grumble about, but so far things have been looking up and we'd like them to continue that way.

Now a third of the paper is computer-produced. Now we can be reached easier and if it is in the middle of a heatwave we will not be grumpy when asked why a mistake was made. Because, dear readers, mistakes unfortunately will still be made. We are only human, and a whiff of fresh air or top of the line computer technology will not erase that. So just bear with us and be there for the next decade's anniversary. We will do our best not to let you down.

A reporter's notebook

By Sa'eda Kilani

WHEN THE office of Her Majesty Queen Noor contacted the newspaper one day over a press release on a conference I was already covering, I knew that something was not quite right.

They had called to make sure I would use Her Majesty's speech in full. A strong feeling told me my article would be filed in the round bin.

But the Jordan Times decided to run my article, attaching one condition to using it and not the press release: I had to have detailed and full coverage of the conference and Her Majesty's speech.

The next day, phone calls from the Royal Court arrived at the paper before I did. A couple of mistakes, made when quoting Her Majesty's speech, were pointed out.

If I had been convinced that I had made mistakes, I would not have made an effort to defend myself. But I was not. My feelings were that the article was in good shape because I had put my heart and soul into it.

Besides, it was a matter of principle and I should stand for what I believed in. I did. With tears in my eyes and a fruitless effort to hide fast heartbeats, I contended that the so-called mistakes were insignificant in that they neither changed the meaning nor distorted Her Majesty's message.

While reporters, proofreaders and typesetters were silently watching the scene, I, the new and young reporter that I was then, said to my senior editors, while trying in vain to collect strength in my voice: "I am not mistaken."

I was. But it was not until I wrote hundreds of more articles that I discovered how important it was to check words, information and facts and to double-check them again and maybe also, again and again.

For the past five years, and during coverage of mainly socio-political news, I never stopped having those feelings of frustration, depression and discouragement, not only at the way things went on a daily basis with officials, senior officials or ordinary people who were afraid or reluctant to speak out, but also, how much we, as journalists, were either unable or not adequately equipped to carry out our assigned role as honest carriers of news.

Access to information, freedom of expression, and the necessary interaction with people and officials—which are essential components of professional journalism—are relatively absent in the Jordanian media environment.

But that certainly is not the only problem. Involvement in the issues can sometimes get in the way of writing a good story. The people we interview are often not acquainted with our role as journalists, either.



Sa'eda is a reporter for the Jordan Times

That proved to be the case when one day I went to the University of Jordan to interview female and male students over women's right to divorce in Islam. While I was assigned to write an article on their views regarding the issue, I ended up having a fight with most of them.

It was completely the opposite situation when I went to the Gaza camp in Jerash, where there is a high rate of unemployment among its residents. Some of them thought I was a social worker who was paying them a visit to solve their problems, while others believed I could help them find a job.

I kept repeating that I was only a journalist and that my mission was to gather information. They, however, tried to convince me that finding jobs for them and solving their problems were part of my job, too!

Probably the most unforgettable but frightening experience for me was when I went to Suwaga prison to interview drug dealers.

Although I was surrounded by policemen, guards and companions, I felt terribly scared.

At the last minute, and before we were escorted to the cells to interview prisoners, I told the prison director that I would make the visit another time if there were difficulties...trying in vain to get out of the situation.

But after the interview with the four "druglords," I felt differently. I could have walked out on one of my best interviews.

Evolution of a newspaper: An old-timer's view

By P.V. Vivekanand

FIVE WORN-OUT iron desks and six rickety chairs, only a couple of telephone extensions with direct dialing facilities, a couple of cupboards, two typewriters and an assortment of rulers and staplers in a five-by-three-metre room.

These were the offices of the Jordan Times when I walked in early 1980 to work as a proofreader. In fact, the late evening shift editors had to wait for the daytime early-page editors to finish their work before they could actually claim the desks and chairs.

At one point, the chief editor of another English-language newspaper, based in the Gulf, walked in, looked around and asked: "What is this, the proofreading room?"

When told that the people in front of him were those who produced the entire newspaper, he immediately offered to recruit everyone at double the salary. But there were no takers.

Today, everyone at the Jordan Times has their own desks and chairs (revolving at that); there is a telephone on everyone's desk with two independent lines as well as a book-up with the main Al Ra'i exchange—meaning another five outgoing lines.

Sophisticated computers have replaced the old typewriters, and one does not actually have to leaf through hundreds of metres of news wires to figure out what is going on around the world. Clicks of a "mouse" should do the trick.

About one-third of the 12-page paper is now done on computer printout—news, layout and design—and, hopefully, it will not be more than three to six months before all 12 pages are done on computer (that is, if some of my colleagues who are one-finger typists pick up on their typing skills fast enough to cope with the change).

Until now, there is no explanation as to why it used to take up to 1.30 to 2 a.m. before the then six-page newspaper was finished in

the mid-80s. Today, even without computers—paste-up artists doing the montage—the 12-page paper could now be finished by around 12 midnight.

There was an instance back then when the late Jum'a Hammad, our publishing company's chairman of the board, was so mad at the perennial delays at the Jordan Times that he suggested using the picture of a shoe instead when told that the chief editor was still trying to hammer out an editorial at 1.30 in the morning.

I found myself quite often in the unenviable position of being at the receiving end of complaints over delays, since, by then, I had moved up the ladder (the proofreading stint lasted less than six months before someone was magnanimous to offer me the job of international news editor—an opportunity that I jumped at with both feet in the air).

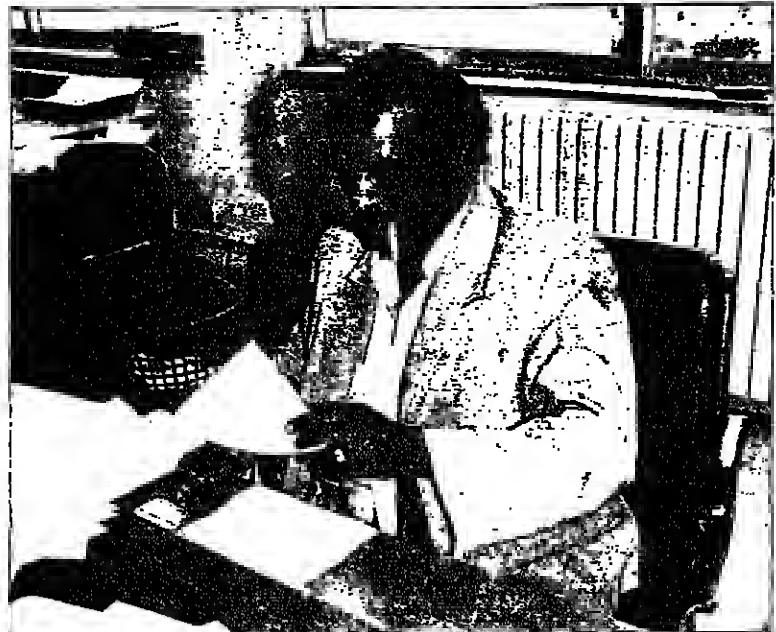
By 1984, the five owners of the Jordan Press Foundation, our publishers, acquired a new building about 200 metres up the street and moved the Jordan Times there.

We had larger space, two independent telephone lines and better furniture.

But our problems were far from over since the vintage computer photo-typesetting department—that is all we had anyway—remained in the old building. It meant messengers shuttling between the two buildings, come rain or sunshine.

Four years later, we were given the good news. We have a new building much closer to the main Al Ra'i building and the shunting was cut down. We moved there. Slowly, the computers were moved to the ground floor of the new building, further reducing the processing time.

But again, as everyone found out to their surprise, there was no real improvement on the delay (perhaps because of overzealousness on the part of the editors to get in the most updated item, nonetheless unpardonable because a delay meant non-distribution of the



P.V. Vivekanand, better known as Anand, is the front and last page editor, as well as Middle East page editor and political economy reporter

paper outside Amman; the reason being that the distribution of the Jordan Times was tied up with that of Al Ra'i, and Al Ra'i was in no mood to wait for us before the vans headed for the south and north at around 1.30 a.m.

Today, we do not hear much complaints except from those in the photography department downstairs who would like to get home early.

"I've got to be at my office at 7.30 in the morning and I cannot afford to hang around until eternity," is the usual complaint of a technician who keeps a daytime job at a government department.

Unfortunately, many journalists, technicians and staff assistants among our colleagues at Al Ra'i and here, still have to moonlight in order to stay afloat—or make ends meet.

One of the marked improvements since the 80s has been in staff salaries, which today are more than double what they were. There are more fringe benefits,

medical insurance, and special credit arrangements for staff. Much more welcome is also an expanded, air-conditioned cafeteria as opposed to two men dispensing tea and coffee from somewhere within a two-by-two-metre space crammed with a 50-year-old refrigerator, a worn-out gas stove and stacks of soft drink bottles.

In the main newsroom today, we have at least six full-time editors (they've not figured out yet what title I should have, with them suggesting chief sub-editor, and I insisting on "senior editor"), a few staff reporters, and more than a dozen of freelance reporters.

But gone are the days when everyone I had the pleasure of "training" automatically quit for greener pastures and did very well wherever they went. The one or two who quit but failed to make their mark in journalism elsewhere perhaps did not actually have it in them to develop themselves as professionals. No loss to the profession there either.

The history of the English-language press in Jordan and Palestine

By Lamis K. Andoni

THE HISTORY of the English-language press in Jordan is inextricably linked with and in fact constitutes an extension of the English-language press in Palestine.

The deep historical bonds between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples and the strong impact the Palestinian problem has left on the political and social outlooks to both peoples have been important factors that shaped the identity and the objectives of English-language newspapers in Jordan and Palestine.

Since the very beginning, the Palestinian question and the Zionist claim to a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine were the main concern of the English-language newspapers. And following the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine in 1948, both the Palestinians and Jordanians cooperated to produce English-language newspapers which could convey the Arab point of view to the world.

Although it is difficult to trace the history of the first English-speaking newspaper in Palestine, Falastin, established in 1929 by the late Issa Elissa in Jaffa, is believed to be the first "sizeable English-speaking paper" published in the country under the British mandate.

Mr. Raja Elissa, director general of the Jordan Distribution Agency, was still a young boy when his father decided to publish Falastin as an offshoot of an Arabic daily which carried the same name.

There were of course other English-speaking newspapers, but Falastin

was the first sizeable newspaper," Mr. Elissa told the Jordan Times.

The first editor of Falastin was an Indian scholar, A.R. Akhtar, and at a later stage, a Palestinian, Azmi Nashashibi, became the editor of that newspaper.

Falastin was established against a backdrop of increasing tension between the Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist Jews who immigrated to Palestine in waves from different parts of the world with the aim of establishing a Jewish "homeland" in the country.

"Consequently Falastin then mainly covered the question of Palestine," Mr. Elissa said. "It was a propaganda organ for the Palestinian cause vis-a-vis the Zionist allegations and schemes."

Falastin, however, could not continue for long and by 1931 its owner was forced to close it down. "It died under heavy losses," Mr. Elissa recalled.

Other English-language newspapers were published following the closure of Falastin but unfortunately not enough details are available on their nature or on the reasons that compelled their closure.

According to a book entitled "The History of the Arab Press in Palestine" between 1876-1948, at least four English-language Palestinian newspapers appeared prior to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

The book provides a chronological breakdown of the English-speaking newspapers in Palestine:

-Time of Palestine, owned by Munir Ibrahim Haddad; a political daily published in Haifa in

1933. -The Palestine Daily Mail (1934-1943), also owned by Mr. Haddad (Editor-in-chief: Labib Butros Jreidini). It focused on politics, trade and social affairs, appearing six days a week, in Haifa.

-The Palestine Youth (no dates available), Publisher Livon Kashabashian, Editor in Chief Shafiq Mansour. A literary quarterly published in Jerusalem.

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the diaspora of the Palestinian people that followed almost paralysed the progress of the Palestinian press in general and the English-speaking newspapers in particular.

Palestinians who were able or allowed to stay in the territories on which Israel was established, struggled to establish an Arabic press which reflected their aspirations and interest and which aimed at preserving the Palestinian identity.

It also took the Palestinians, who found themselves refugees in the West Bank, Gaza Strip or scattered around the Arab World, a while to recover from the shock of becoming homeless and to resume the development of the Palestinian press.

The priority was naturally given to the Arabic-language press, but by 1963, 13 years after the unification of East and West Bank, the owners of the Jerusalem-based Al Jihad Arabic daily decided that the time was ripe for publishing an English-language newspaper.

According to Mr. Elissa, the Jerusalem Times was an eight-page political daily printed in tabloid size. "It also included

columns and articles, but it mainly depended on the translation of political news from Al Jihad.

The Jerusalem Times continued until 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank.

In 1966, Mr. Elissa and Mahmoud Sharif, who owned the Al-Manar Arabic daily then, jointly published the Jerusalem Star which lasted for one year only.

Mr. Sharif was the general director of the former Jerusalem Star, Mr. Elissa was its editor and the once-famous American TV correspondent Suleiman Abdullah Shriefer its managing editor.

The Jerusalem-based Jerusalem Star had a number of freelance reporters, who covered local news and were mostly foreigners who resided in Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Star heavily depended on translated material since international news agencies at the time rarely covered the Arab World in their English service.

"We depended on Reuters for international news and on its Arab affiliate, the Arab News Agency, for the news of the Arab World and the Middle East," Mr. Sharif said.

"Unlike nowadays the main problem we faced was the scarcity of news," Mr. Sharif noted. "Today the problem that faces the editors is how to select news from the avalanche of reports supplied by the Arabic and international news agencies."

Most commentaries, editorials and columns, which appeared in the former Jerusalem Star were political and attempted to refute Israeli and Zionist policies, according to Mr.

Elissa. That reflected the feelings of Palestinians and Arabs towards the establishment of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people, he said.

But following the Christmas issue of 1966, the owners of the Jerusalem Star found themselves compelled to close it.

"We had to fold it down for economic reasons," Mr. Sharif explained. "There was not enough advertising."

Another problem, as both Mr. Elissa and Mr. Sharif agreed, was the limited circulation of all newspapers. "Most of our readers were in Jerusalem but tens of copies were also sold in Amman and in the East Bank," Mr. Elissa said.

Mr. Sharif recalled that the circulation was so limited compared to the present time, to the extent that an Arabic daily which sold 4,000-5,000 copies a day was considered a big success.

Three months following the closure of the Jerusalem Star, the Jordanian government still thought that there was need for an English-language daily and consequently entered into a partnership with Mr. Elissa who agreed to edit a new English publication. This was to be the Palestine News.

"The Palestine News was the most up-to-date English-language daily in the sense that it had a full complement of staff compared with the previous English-language newspapers," Mr. Elissa pointed out. "A full complement of staff in the standards of those days meant that for the first time an English daily had 12 people working for it,"

he explained.

While Mr. Elissa was the editor of Palestine News, Nabil Elissa was its managing editor.

"The newspaper depended mainly on freelance reporters who wrote features," Mr. Elissa said.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in June 1967 marked the end of the Palestine News short life, however, and it was not until October, 1975 that another English-language daily was to be appeared. This is the Jordan Times whose story is being told today.

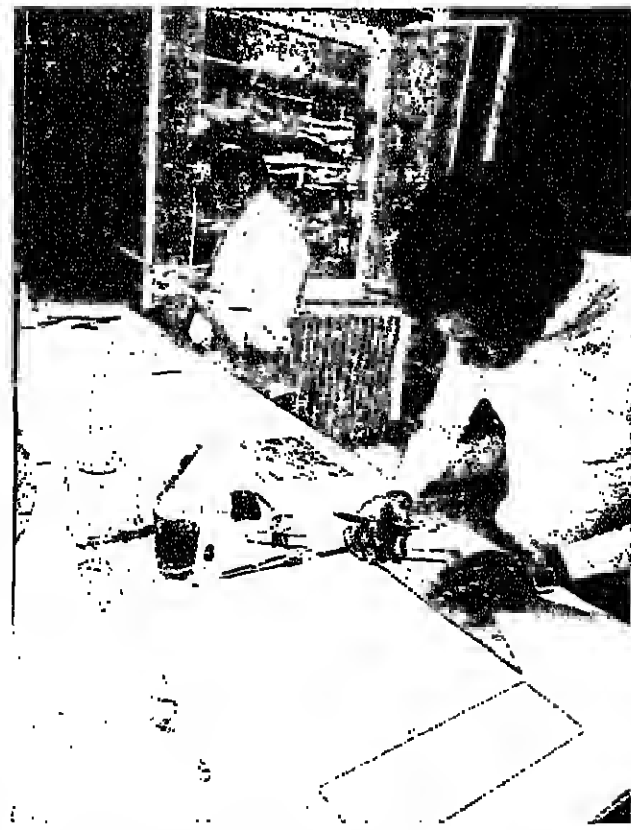
In 1983 the owners of Al Dustour, among them Mr. Sharif, decided to start another English newspaper in Jordan and applied for the right to name it the Jerusalem Star.

"We felt that we had a moral right to reclaim that name," Mr. Sharif said. "Our application for the same name also reflected nostalgia for those years and to the first Jerusalem Star."

According to Mr. Sharif, one English daily (the Jordan Times) was enough for Jordan, and Al Dustour therefore decided that the new Jerusalem Star be a weekly newspaper with focus on in-depth features and news analysis.

The Jerusalem Star folded in 1988 and its offspring, The Star was established in 1990. Its chief editor is Osama Sharif.

Jordan's two English-language newspapers are coexisting in peace and harmony today. Who knows what the future holds for them?



Montagists at work in the early days of the newspaper. Yusef Jammal, in the background, has been working as a montagist at the newspaper since its establishment

Twenty years at the Jordan Times

By Yusef Jammal

AS THE longest serving employee of the Jordan Times, it gratifies me to see the great developments witnessed in the newspaper, in terms of quality and quantity.

The long working hours used to lapse as we thought of nothing but getting the pages to press. The commitment to see that happen meant that so often, our regular lives outside the newspaper were put on hold. Life went on, and no matter what, we would wait to receive the pages that were to be laid out.

Pasting, cutting, gluing, re-pasting, re-cutting and re-gluing. In the very early days, the newspaper had a Pakistani chief editor who worked all day until the paper was printed in the early hours of the morning. There was only one typesetter, an Egyptian named Mohammad Siraj, who used to operate a linotype machine. He was also responsible for maintaining and fixing his machine.

As days passed, faces changed and new machines were brought in. The lead printing press was replaced with a modern one and the newspaper finally took the path to computerisation.

I feel honoured to have worked for the Jordan Times for 20 years. I have grown up with this newspaper; indeed, it is like a second home to me. I am part of this establishment and its memories will forever remain engraved deep into my mind.



A group photo of the Jordan Times staff

Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan

Bloopers and bloomers — the inside sorry, sorry, 'story'

By P.V. Vivekanand

"WHO WAS ON duty last night?" This is a question every page editor at the newspaper dreads, particularly when it comes from the Chief Editor.

It simply means that there has been a foul-up in that day's issue of the paper.

Effectively, the person "on duty"—one of the page editors doing it on rotation for every day of the week—is supposed to check the entire newspaper the night before and ensure that there are no mistakes before the pages are sent down for printing.

But that is easier said than done.

As with almost every other newspaper, the Jordan Times has had its share of foul-ups and bloopers, some of which have been very serious, touching sensitivities, and others simply laughed off as typos.

But every bloomer and bopper has a story behind it, and more often than not they are the result of simple human errors and not following the set rules, which seem foolproof in principle, but are not in practice.

The old adage that says, "when I do an excellent job no-one remembers, but when I make a mistake no one forgets" is perhaps most applicable in journalism than in any other field.

Readers might not remember that the Jordan Times predicted the 1983 Sabra and Shatila massacres two days ahead of the killings or that it accurately ran the names of cabinet line-ups before anyone else, but they would definitely remember a headline which said "Smuggled heroine seized," where someone down the newspa-

per processing line added an "e" to "heroin" and left readers wondering who the lady in question was.

True, the Jordan Times' history is replete with blunders and mistakes, all of which, to our knowledge at least, were unintended. For instance, there are dozens of times when the paper drew solid laughs—with ads like "Apartment suitable for ex-patriots" and "Housewife wanted."

But there have also been serious errors which, understandably, leave readers wondering how such blunders could occur.

Take, for example, our latest foul-up.

We had a story on a member of the Royal family visiting an Irbid institution. The story ran well, as did the caption of the accompanying photograph.

But it was the wrong photograph, showing another member of the Royal family at a different place attending a different occasion.

How could this happen?

The answer is simple: The page editor left instructions with the montagist that the relevant photo should be coming from the Jordan News Agency, Petra, around 10.30 p.m., and should be used in the allocated slot.

It so happened that the English-language skills of the concerned montagist were nothing to write home about, and he could not bother reading the story to find out what it was about (not that he is expected to do so since we have one of the page editors checking every page before it goes down to printing).

All that the montagist heard was that he had to use the photo of a princess and that he did, but he picked the wrong one when the late-night batch of photographs arrived.

Normally, the mistake should have been spotted before the page went down to the printing press, but, again, since the concerned page was done fully on computer, proofread and checked again by the page editor, the duty editor did not think it was necessary to go through the page again (it should not have happened, but it did).

Then there was this flap over banking in the West Bank, when the reporter interviewed the governor of the Central Bank of Jordan over the phone—obviously it was a bad line—and heard "40 per cent" instead of "14 per cent."

And so the story appeared with the "40 per cent" figure instead of 14 per cent, prompting the governor to call the reporter asking for an explanation. The paper naturally had to run a correction. This happened only a few days ago.

But that was a relatively lighter mistake.

What would one say of a glaring proof-reading error in a report involving a political activist that drew a lot of laughs around town, but nonetheless not without its implications.

The blooper came when an "I" went missing from the word "public" and the context in which the word was used made it much more difficult to explain that it was indeed a genuine mistake. (At least two of our esteemed readers called up to say they were keeping the story framed).

The easiest explanation

that the individual duty editor concerned offers whenever a foul-up occurs is that he or she is working under pressure and cannot be expected to read every word and check every comma in the entire 12 pages of the paper in a matter of an hour or so there are half a million characters in your average Jordan Times).

In principle, however, that is what is expected of the duty editor.

It is also assumed that every editor reads the newspaper every day so that he or she is up-to-date with news and thus could spot duplication of stories or follow up on stories.

That system obviously failed two weeks ago, when, readers might remember, the paper repeated the whole of Column 8 on the last page. Column 8, we might tell, reports the oddities of people and freak incidents. (By the way, Column 8 was named as such some years ago when the Jordan Times had only eight pages and the column was the 8th column on the 8th page).

The explanation for the repeated column two weeks ago was simple: There were two copies of the same story printout ready for montage the night before, and the montagist had stuck the extra copy on the wall near him.

Another montagist was doing the same page next day, and he assumed that the copy stuck on the wall was for use on that day; so he ended up pasting it on the page.

Again, the night duty editor could not spot the repetition (the argument being, of course, that if he had actually read the newspaper

of the day then the glaring repetition would have been easily spotted).

Obviously, he had not, and the paper had to take the flak from the readers, who, for their own reasons, seem to read Column 8 items before they even look at the main stories of the day.

A missing word or a grammatical error (singular/plural) in a headline is perhaps a genuine human error, but what about an entire missing headline?

No one seems to have the answer to that except the obvious fact that it could have been nothing but the result of negligence on the part of the duty editor.

Then there was that beautiful ad, not so long ago, from a school looking for a French teacher: "Wanted: A private school and college seeks a french teacher. With experience not less than 10 years."

Remember?

Again, negligence or human error? Well, the advertisement was received at the newspaper after 10 p.m. It was sent by an agency, already printed, and since the time was quite late, it went straight to the montagists and onto the page without following the normal "scanning for errors" routine.

Some of the Jordan Times staff and many readers still remember the time when the newspaper had the biggest bloomer that any publication could have ever made—using the photograph of a monkey instead of a dead man's picture used in a death notice.

That was way back in 1978. One would laugh it off now, but not at that time when the family of the man wanted blood in return for

what, as far as they were concerned, was a simple and open insult to the memory of the deceased.

Indeed, when the mistake was spotted, the advertising manager and circulation staff rushed to newsstands and distribution centres to claim back the copies, but it was too late.

In fact, some vendors simply refused to return the copies (obviously believing that there had to be something politically controversial and important if the newspaper people were trying to stop the circulation of the issue).

The chief editor then had

to do a vanishing act for almost a day before the administrative management of the establishment pacified the family of the deceased through tribal mediation (sulha).

Sure enough, there was a big apology the next day and a re-run of the original obituary as it was supposed to have run in the first place.

Positioning of stories is another problem. Given the political sensitivities that characterise the Jordanian and Middle Eastern scene, one cannot simply overlook that some people might read more into what they

might consider as the "motivation" behind running two stories next to each other.

Much as one would hate to say it, some of the officials whose job is to act as public relations officers for some of the institutions of the country do not seem too flexible at all when it comes to their own interpretations of the "motivation."

The long and short of it is simple: Like the readers, the people working at the Jordan Times are also human and do make mistakes. We try to do our best, but on some days things do go wrong—wholesale.

John Boteler adds from ten years ago

ONE OF the main reasons that people read the Jordan Times is that it has a refreshing approach to news stories.

Indeed, many a time it "scoops" the rest of the world press with stories of international significance.

In March 1985, the Jordan Times informed its readers that doctors had found "a benign policy" in Ronald Reagan's colon. Subsequent events have proved this to be unfounded (some have claimed that the object in question was in fact a polyp), but Jordan Times reporters are never dissuaded by mere facts.

The world renowned English magazine, Private Eye, kept faith with our original coverage of this story and they were also glad to reprint another story of ours that Pope John Paul II had "beautified" a South American nun.

Detractors say that his action was one of "beatification" but then even we have our enemies.

As a standard bearer of law and order, Page Three (the exact date cannot be confirmed owing to the sinister disappearance of file copies from the period concerned) announced that police had discovered an important clue to a murder, in the form of a man's body hanging from the ceiling.

It is not only in the reporting of news that the Jordan Times breaks new ground. Their pioneering work also extends to advertising, in particular, those ads aimed at foreigners with a limited grasp of English: "Are you forin and looking for work?" we asked last year (1984), and were overwhelmed by applicants for jobs in our proofreading and editorial posts.

Another first was our decision to print the paper without the dateline. This was brought about by an attempt to ensure that nobody could accuse us of printing items that were out-of-date.

In 1981, concerned at the result of a survey which indicated that some readers only briefly glanced at the pages without fully absorbing the information, the Jordan Times experimented by printing both page three and seven twice, but unfortunately the response was not all that was hoped for.

Hindsight would suggest that the omission of pages four and five to facilitate this experiment was a mistake, but it was nonetheless gratifying to discover that our readers are more thorough in following world events than the original survey suggested.

The embarrassing moment when we mixed up the captions of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan was negligible compared to the time when we wrote—in a headline—Haram Al Sharif as Hammam Al Sharif (For those who do not know, Hammam means bath. Haram means sanctity).

Because of the many mistakes that appear in it, The Guardian of London is often called The "Grauniad" or "Gua-mad" by even the most faithful of its readers. So, dear readers of the Jordan Times, you can call the Jordan Times "Jordan Smite," or, as Hammam, our messenger, prefers it, the "Janker Times," if you like, but only if you continue reading us.

John Boteler has since returned to his native England and he does all kinds of editing jobs there

